

Articulating Chinese Cultural Identity through Participating in
Teaching Chinese Mandarin Heritage Language

by

Yu Shen

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and
Postdoctoral Affairs in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Anthropology

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

© 2012
Yu Shen



Library and Archives
Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-87784-5

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-87784-5

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

Abstract

This thesis is an ethnographic analysis examining the views and practices of Mandarin teachers in one Ottawa-based Chinese Language School. Set within the context of institutionalized multiculturalism in Canada, I argue that these practitioners, who participate in teaching Mandarin in the Chinese diasporic/immigrant community, take on a constant negotiation between the meanings of the Chinese language and its relationship to Chinese culture. Teaching in this context becomes a generative venue for constructing teachers' own meanings about Chinese cultural identity. To explore this, I tease out the forces or conditions, practices and experiences that are enmeshed in the making and working of such a speech community, and offer nuanced analyses of personal narratives on "Chineseness" among these international and/or heritage language teachers. As their embodied language knowledge and skills become objectified and transformed into cultural knowledge on Chinese cultural identity, individual immigrants participate in and contribute to the formation of plural links among the various discourses on Chineseness. Mandarin language teachers therefore engage the questions of Chinese cultural identity through their varied articulations and performances. The notion of "Chineseness" is, therefore, not a fixed, one-dimensional entity in this Mandarin speech community context.

Acknowledgement

My deep thanks to the support of my parents, Buyi Shen and Zhongxuan Zhu, my husband Ruogu Yao, and my thesis supervisors, Professor Brian Given and Professor Xiaobei Chen. I thank Eric Henry for reading all the drafts of my thesis and commenting on them. My sincere thanks go to all my informants in the community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgment.....	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Illustrations.....	iv
List of Tables.....	v
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: In Theory	19
An interdisciplinary interest in the boundaries of cultural identity among Chinese immigrants.....	19
Language and culture.....	20
Chinese communities in diaspora and multiculturalism.....	24
Ethnic and cultural identity.....	31
Summary	36
Chapter Three: On Methodology, from Seminar Room to Fieldwork.....	39
Key-informant interview as a communicative event	41
“Translating” and/or interpreting Chineseness, from seminar room to fieldwork.....	45
The linguistic and conceptual shades of Chineseness as an issue in translation and interpretation	50
Translatable or untranslatable?.....	59
Inter-subjectivity in ethnographic quest	62
Chapter Four: A Chinese Language School under the Program of International Languages	66
International Languages Program, and/or Heritage Language Program.....	66
Nuances of the use of terminologies in communication.....	69
Local space.....	73
Summary.....	81
Chapter Five: Articulating and Performing Chineseness in Teaching.....	84
Teaching Chinese in the community, a site of agency.....	84
Negotiating and performing personalized versions of Chineseness.....	94
My approach of a comparative interpretation.....	112
Summary	115
Chapter Six: Conclusion	117
The Chinese language school as a node in diasporic social network.....	119
Teaching as a form to construct a Chinese cultural identity in Canada.....	121
Questions for further research	122
Bibliography.....	126

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1: Layers of translation

Illustration 2: An ordinary neighborhood (Photo)

Illustration 3: The Talking Corner in front of Ms. Ping's office (Photo)

Illustration 4: The billboard advertising of New Oriental promoting English learning classes in China (Photo)

Illustration 5: Strategies of teaching

LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1.1: Immigrant Population by Place of Birth and Period of Immigration, Statistics Canada, 2006 Census
- Table 1.2: Permanent Residents by Source Country. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Facts and Figures 2008
- Table 3.1: (Un)Translatability of the Notion of Chineseness
- Table 3.2: Level of Accessibility with Different Frames of Reference on Chineseness
- Table 4.1: Juxtaposition of the Terminologies

Chapter 1: Introduction

"[T]he setting trope – a narrative convention both shaping and shaped by experiences of fieldwork – is one of a journey, more or less linear, where order and meaning gradually emerge from initially inchoate events and experiences."

-- Dorinne K. Kondo, *Crafting Selves* (1996,7)

This research explores the question of constructing cultural identities through the microcosmic lens of teaching Mandarin as a heritage language at a Chinese language school in Ottawa, the national Capital of Canada. I argue that teaching Mandarin as a heritage language is a means for an instructor to engage, define, interpret and perform various meanings of one's cultural identity in the context of Canadian multiculturalism. To recognize what forms of cultural identity are present, what constitutes cultural identity, and how it manifests in one's cultural being via everyday practices mean several things. First, it allows individuals to negotiate and construct their own cultural heritage and narratives of personal trajectory. Second, it motivates them to challenge, interpret and reflect on the cultural background that they were born into and socialized within. Third, it can point to the nature of personhood to a degree to see how people behave as cultural beings in various social and cross-cultural encounters and interactions.

I will now present an anecdote about my vested interest in studying the relationship between one's cultural identity and his or her heritage language. While I was still stumbling over theories, concepts and words during my first year coursework of language and culture in cultural anthropology, a more pertinent question deriving from my everyday life as a new immigrant was finally conceived in my mind. It happened after my meeting with one teenage boy from a Chinese immigrant family at a community event in Ottawa a few years ago. Unlike other teenagers in the

community who were less likely to take the initiative to chat with adults in Chinese¹, especially in a public place, after a casual greeting of “nihao” (hello) in Chinese, the boy continued the conversation with me by telling me that he came to Canada with his family at around six years of age. As one would normally do to recognize and encourage this effort made by children, I praised him for speaking good Chinese. We continued our conversation. He told me he studied Chinese on Saturdays regularly. I became more interested in talking with him since rarely did I ever see Chinese children from immigrant families spontaneously giving positive feedback with regard to learning Chinese as his or her “mother tongue”. I use the term “mother tongue” here since, at that point in time, I took for granted that Chinese was the mother tongue of the children who were born in Canada or came to Canada at a young age². At one point, I detected a flash of enthusiasm on his face and in his voice, as the boy started to share with me a new word he just learned from his favored Chinese teacher, “banana” (xiangjiao 香蕉). To me, this flash showed his genuine interest in “discovering” such an expression. The term “banana” was not new to me. I learned this word way back during my earlier days of studying English in China, along with other associated terms such as “ABC (American-born Chinese)”. After coming to Canada, I learned that the term, “CBC” (an abbreviation for Canadian-born Chinese) was the Canadian version of “ABC”. In general, “banana” refers to any ethnic Asian person who was born or raised outside Asia, and spent much of their early developmental years in the “West,”

¹ The reason I say the Chinese children are “less likely to take initiative to chat” might fit into the stereotype of Chinese children who usually gave the impression of being shy and hold back from expressing themselves in public. In the situation I described, it is probably due to the fact that the second generation (and/or multi-generation) of Chinese children is overall not fluent and confident in speaking Chinese. I will describe in later chapters to what kind of environment and expectations these children are exposed in terms of Chinese literacy development.

² Although being trained as a cultural anthropologist, I am consciously aware of the issue of cultural assumptions. I admit that at the beginning of my research, I still took for granted that Chinese or Mandarin was the mother tongue of these children. This assumption is very common among first generation Chinese Canadians. My assumption, together with other first generation Chinese immigrants, was seriously challenged after the encounters and interactions with young second generation both within and beyond family contexts (the Chinese language schools).

including Australia, Britain, Canada, and the USA. I have made a point of mentioning this particular anecdote because I am trying to explain the inchoate direction of my thesis project. My thesis project has taken root as a result of the encounter between the boy and me, and an implicit reason that I was able to relate to him and make certain connections in some way at the time. Was it because of the flash on his face and the audible excitement in his voice? Was it triggering my memory of some fun in learning this slang word out of my tedious days of learning a foreign language, namely English? For any of the possible reasons recollected, I was able to empathize with the young boy and his new discovery in the word.

I have attempted to use the luxury of memory and reflection to tease out how the “inception” of my research has come about before the emergence of a focus. My subjective position as a member of the Chinese community living in Canada, as well as my anthropological training, position me in a familiar yet strange relationship with other community members, or generally other members of Chinese culture (Agar 1980). My own feelings about Chinese cultural identity could be subtly connected to the word “banana”, but through a different vista from the boy’s. Thinking back again, the flash that lit up his face could signify many interpretations of the term “banana”. Firstly, “banana” in the Chinese language teaching and learning context can bring some lighthearted laughter to learning. In another context, “banana” can be a derogatory label for Asian-Canadian or American (B.A.N.A.N.A. 2010). And yet, it is widely used as a statement of identity and self-identification among “Bananas”, generally the second and/or multi-generational Canadians whose ancestors were originally from Asia. It could also imply a feeling of embarrassment for speaking “not-so-good” Chinese as a Chinese descendant. The word itself tells a story about contestations over the inscription and re-inscription of an originally derogatory racial

tag.

Taking a non-essentialist position and employing an interpretative framework, I began with questions concerning the way people think and perform their Chinese identities in everyday life. In everyday communication and interaction, the meanings always rely on the communicative context to be revealed. I pose questions such as: How are the meanings of words in relation to one's ethnic or cultural identity dependent on communicative events among its interlocutors? How does Chinese heritage language or Chinese contribute to the relationship with one's cultural identity, and the formation of social groups or communities of immigrants? What are the meaningful boundaries of cultural or ethnic identity? What kinds of "sense of belonging" revolve around speaking one's heritage language? In my attempt to respond to these questions, I detail the attitudes claimed by, and practices of a group of community members, specifically the practitioners of heritage language teaching, and try to make sense of their everyday negotiation with both self and other members in one heritage language school.

Canada's 2006 census shows that immigrants from the People's Republic of China ranked second in terms of population following only the United Kingdom (Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, Table 1.1). Table 2.1 provides a quantitative summary about the immigration of new Chinese-Canadians, in the past ten years or so (from 1999 to 2008). It shows that the People's Republic of China was the top source country for permanent residents³ in Canada during this time frame. A substantial majority of the ethnically Chinese population living in Canada was born outside the country. Close to 45% of foreign-born Canadians of Chinese origin were born in the

³ Permanent residents are defined as people who have been granted permanent resident status in Canada. Permanent residents must live in Canada for at least 730 days (two years) within a five-year period otherwise will risk losing their status. Though "permanent residents" is a policy term, the group of "permanent residents" tends to live, work or study in Canada with a comparatively long-term plan. My use of "Chinese Canadian" in this thesis also refers to those enjoy at least the status of permanent residence.

People's Republic of China, while approximately 30% were born in Hong Kong and almost 10% were from Taiwan. The Census also shows the large majority of people in Canada of Chinese origin say they have no other origin than Chinese. More than 80% of all those who reported Chinese origin said they came from China, while 14% said they also had other ethnic origins. In contrast, almost 40% of the overall Canadian population claims multiple ethnic origins. This implies that “Chinese” tends to be seen as a highly homogenous category. Meanwhile, “Chinese” languages, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Min, Hakka (Kejia), and other dialects, also became the third most spoken language in Canada according to the 2006 Census (Statistics Canada). According to Isajiw (1996; 1990), for immigrants, ethnic or heritage language learning (ELL) is among several key symbolic practices in identity retention, and is intertwined with social, political and economic status, either voluntarily or involuntarily (others include food consumption, possession of ethnic objects of art etc.). In the spirit of plurality and multiculturalism in Canada, a contentious issue is how ethnic language maintenance helps to incubate both pride in one’s own cultural heritage and feelings of inclusiveness in national identity.

Table 1.1: Immigrant Population by Place of Birth and Period of Immigration, Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Place of birth	Total - Immigrant Population*	Period of immigration			
		Before 1991	1991 to 1995	1996 to 2000	2001 to 2006
<i>Total</i>	6,186,950	3,408,415	823,925	844,625	1,109,980
United Kingdom (1)**	579,620	515,135	20,630	18,200	25,655
China, People's Republic of (2)	466,940	133,910	69,635	108,285	155,105
Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region (7)	215,430	107,925	66,570	33,505	7,430
Taiwan (24)	65,205	12,670	17,240	24,575	10,715

* Immigrants are persons who are, or have ever been, landed immigrants in Canada. A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right to live

in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Some immigrants have resided in Canada for a number of years, while others are more recent arrivals. Most immigrants are born outside Canada, but a small number were born in Canada. Includes immigrants who landed in Canada prior to Census Day, May 16, 2006.

** Table 1.1 includes data of United Kingdom, the top country from which Canadian immigrants come from in order to provide readers of my thesis a sense of the numerical gap between the top two rankings. The number in bracket beside the name of country means the ranking of immigrants population.

Table 1.2: Permanent Residents by Source Country. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Facts and Figures 2008

Source countries	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
China, People's Republic of (1)*	29,147	36,750	40,365	33,307	36,252	36,429	42,292	33,079	27,013	29,336
India (2)**	17,457	26,123	27,902	28,838	24,594	25,573	33,146	30,754	26,052	24,549
Taiwan (16)	5,483	3,535	3,114	2,910	2,126	1,992	3,092	2,823	2,780	2,972
Hong Kong (36)	3,672	2,865	1,965	1,541	1,472	1,547	1,783	1,489	1,131	1,324

* The number in bracket refers to the ranking of the permanent residents population.

** For the same reason data of United Kingdom is included in Table 1.1, India is enlisted in Table 1.2, which occupies the second ranking in Canadian permanent residence by source country to provide a sense of the gap between the top two rankings.

Cultural messages are embedded in the medium of language in context. Specific words as linguistic signs, like racial/ethnic group names, as well as identity terms such as “banana”, are meaningful units (building blocks) in communication, which bear bundles of cultural and contextual information. Signified meanings of words, or referents, are context sensitive. Both Urciuoli (1996) and Hill (2008) have paid critical attention, from an anthropological point of view, to the issue of linguistic prejudice, and argue that it is the everyday language indexed by its referents to race, ethnicity, history, and power relations that structures the routine experiences of people. While Urciuoli emphasizes the semiotic or indexical nature of language in explaining how Puerto Ricans and their language come to be racialized in the United States, Hill

uncovers the everyday presence of linguistic ideologies and linguistic appropriations that shape and reproduce the dominant thinking among majority white Americans towards people of color. Similar to the example of “banana”, if not with the exactly same connotation, is the colloquial term “foreigner” (laowai 老外, literally meaning old foreigners) in the everyday Chinese lexicon. When Chinese people say “laowai”, they generally refer to all non-Chinese people, often white, as opposed to the Chinese. The term “Laowai” implies distinctions between centre/periphery, inclusiveness/exclusiveness, and us/them. The meaning(s) might be reflected in the name of “Zhongguo” as the central kingdom. The term “laowai” is objectified with fixed boundaries, which are usually conflated with both political and geographical boundaries. Regardless of the taxonomy conceived in language and words, the question might be probed as such, is the category of “laowai” insulting, or praising? How do people, both Chinese and non-Chinese, feel about this way of labeling and being labeled respectively? To what extent does the calling (the Chinese) reflect one’s cultural identity (as a Chinese)? As people assume an intimate relationship between one’s cultural identity and language, what about the “laowai” who does speak Chinese, like the famous Canadian in China who was given the nickname Dashan (Big Mountain), and who is capable of performing a Chinese traditional comedy skit (xiangsheng) in fluent Mandarin. Do people really refer to him as “laowai”? How about the Chinese speaking no Mandarin but local dialect(s) only? At the end, it is what the normal people react to, think upon and behave in certain situations that count.

On the one hand, the words as a form of language do have “core” referents as a common ground for the sake of communication. On the other hand, the meaning of words constantly escapes their confines. It is impossible for speakers to get across all related signified meanings, especially in oral communication, which is transient in

nature. During my research, I used terms like “China” (zhongguo中国), “Chinese people” (zhongguoren中国人) or “overseas Chinese ” (huaren 华人 or haiwai huaren 海外华人) because other Chinese community members use them. Although the referents of these words were not contradictory to me, my usage focused on them as labels for a Chinese cultural identity. For my informants, the words were not self-evidently equal or even similar. Miscommunication, or tension thus occurs in the use of these terms. In my thesis, I will try as much as I can to put the terms in their contexts of use to represent my informants’ cultural perspective.

Triggered by that boy-cracked-up-by-banana, Chinese Language School officially fell into my research horizon. There are at least six Chinese language schools in the Ottawa area. “Hai Pi” is one of the two that have been operating for over ten years. Advertisements promoting Chinese language schools can easily be found by perusing community newspapers at around the time of the new school year or summer time. “Hai Pi”’s advertisement, similar to the other Chinese language schools’, was straightforward and functional, covering registration information and types of classes. “Hai Pi” offered Mandarin classes (zhongwen ke中文课) at both primary and secondary levels. A variety of extracurricular courses literally translated as Interest Courses (xingqu ke兴趣课), were listed, for example Chinese chess, drawing, calligraphy, crafts and Chinese folk drumming. A French course was also newly introduced for community members, according to the advertising. “Hai Pi” operates under one of the eight French Catholic Boards. Before moving to its current site, it had operated at another site under one of the English school boards for several years. With the change of the school board, the school moved to the current site in 2000. Today, “Hai Pi” offers Mandarin to more than 600 students during the weekends.

Each Chinese language school has its own individual name to distinguish itself

from others. However, people talk about, “zhongwen xuexiao 中文学校”, a literal translation of “Chinese Language School” as the primary reference. Children from immigrant families were more or less “naturalized” or “socialized” to learn Chinese as their heritage language or family language when they began going to Chinese Language School. When parents were asked “Why send your child to a Chinese Language School?” their answers included statements such as: “... to give my child(ren) a certain exposure to Chinese language and learning environment”, “... my children listen to the teacher not me ... (in terms of learning Chinese)”, “... better to learn with other children” and “... mostly play, maybe a bit study”, or to a even more general answer like, “... to give them (children) some activities to do on Saturdays”. Learning Chinese is not so much an obligation or a burden, but more of an option for a child’s learning and development in general among today’s immigrant families. The kind of casual attitudes among parents arouses questions with regards to the dialectical relationship between ethnic identity and language. Does heritage language learning offer a sense of belonging? What type of speech community is being constructed in heritage language learning? What are the language practices that converge into a community in diaspora?

“Heritage Language” denotes cultural re-production serving the purpose of cultural perpetuity and survival. As the official language of the People’s Republic of China’s population of more than 1.3 billion, Mandarin is by no means in danger of becoming a dead language like Latin. No one in the community thinks Chinese is by any means an easy language to learn. Parents have lowered expectations of their children’s learning outcomes as far as listening and speaking are concerned, not to mention reading and writing. I often heard some “pro-Chinese-maintenance or learning” parents proudly recognize their children’s learning progress or achievement

by claiming "... he (or she) has been speaking more Chinese at home recently" or "... he (or she) had a longer conversation in Chinese over the phone with my parents." However, during informal chats with more parents, parents shared many stories of their children's reluctance or even resistance to the Chinese language school, although in a teasing way.

"My daughter is very 'cool' at the Chinese Language School. Every time the teacher asks her about something, she stares at the teacher, speaking no word in Chinese. You know my daughter right? She is not like that at all at day school. She gets 'Excellent' in all subjects in the day school. She is willing to speak Chinese, but...."

"我女儿在中文学校里很'酷'，她不说话，老师问她，她就看着老师不说话。你知道我女儿对吧，她平时在学校里不这样。她在学校里各门功课拿到都是优秀。她还是愿意说中文的，可....."

(Mom, Informal Interview)

"My son hates to come to the Chinese language school. I have to promise him a reward like ice cream in advance. I saw my friend's car at the front door, he had to drag his son out of his car. Compared to his English (daytime) school, Chinese school is so much less fun. For example, there was a Walking Hair Day in his day school. He got excited two week before the event day, nagging me about "how shall I do this? How shall I do that?"

"我儿子不喜欢来中文学校。我得先说奖励他冰激凌。我看见我朋友的车停在校门口，他得拽他儿子下车。和英文学校比起来，中文学校一点儿也不好玩。比如他学校里会一个"头发走路日"，他两星期之前就开始激动，拉着我'该怎么弄这个，该怎么弄那个。"

(Dad, Informal Interview)

These stories tell me about these parents' somewhat contradictory feelings about their children's Chinese language learning. It seems to me that the parents have tried to be more understanding of their children's position in terms of their integration into the host country. "They don't think they are Chinese, they think they are Canadian, 'I'm Canadian', they (the children) told us as straightforward as it is", the teachers and parents told me. "(Other) people will still see you as Chinese", teachers and parents try to "convince" the children. By insisting on a Chinese identity in the children, the

teachers and parents seem to be in a defensive position towards the division of senses of belongings within the family or community. Meanwhile, teachers and parents learn to justify this “inconvenient truth” by acknowledging their children as a different kind of Chinese, an issue many first generation Chinese immigrants might not ponder over, as nationalism is a predominant ideology in their home country. After moving to Canada, adult immigrants start to learn that there is a gap between their children, who are born in Canada or came to Canada at an early age, and themselves with regard to speaking a “mother tongue”. One’s sense of Chineseness, as represented by Mandarin, faces overwhelming challenges in the context of teaching and learning Chinese. It is more than a question of whether to learn or not to learn the language. It is more about to what extent parents’ attachments, emotions, memories and experiences of speaking Chinese are relevant to the children, as there are various versions of embodied Chineseness even in an intimate family or homogenous community context. What sense of Chineseness, authentic or inauthentic, real or perceived, is one able to create, derive, intuit, assume, accept, take on and experience for him- or her-self? How is one person more capable of accessing the Chinese linguistic and cultural resources more freely than others do? I will discuss in more detail the strategies that the teachers create, derive, negotiate and construct in order to articulate a meaningful yet fragmented individual version of Chineseness.

The conclusion parents drew from their children’s lack of motivation in learning Chinese was that “they are Canadian”. This speaks to a stark juxtaposition of identities, between “me” and “them”, “Chinese” and “Canadian”, commonly found in a diasporic context. In the context of multiculturalism, speaking no (or bad) Chinese for these “little Canadians” has become justified and more acceptable. Immigrant parents are inclined to take a fairly utilitarian view towards the language.

Nevertheless, the over-generalization that “they are just different” might mirror immigrants’ everyday disadvantages associated with minoritized social, cultural and linguistic differences in a wider context of immigrant life, especially among first-generation immigrants.

Learning Chinese in an everyday family context is definitely a more intimate way to study Chinese. Family is considered a more important avenue in shaping children’s perceptions and attitudes towards their heritage language than the school is. Thus, what explanations did immigrant community members offer for arranging language schooling for their children? As I will describe in more details in my thesis, one of the reasons is that the school framed learning in a unique context, tied to the organization and structure of the school (Chapter 4). An alternative explanation also exists in the practices of how agentic community members participate and practice in these learning activities. Those key words in parents’ answers such as “exposure”, “learning environment”, “learning with others”, and “doing activities” led me to further exploration in the context as well as the content at the locality.

A few chats with any community member led me to see little difference among these schools. There is a difference between schools teaching Mandarin and those teaching Cantonese. Other than that, all the Chinese schools seem to be more similar than different. When probed, the parents pointed out the important role of teachers. The key factor in differentiating between a school that children like to go to and one that children are reluctant to attend is the teachers. Parents do acknowledge the teachers’ role in contributing to their children learning better Chinese, as teachers are assumed to be professionals with more expertise in teaching than parents. For example, the best teachers are, according to my informants, those who “arouse children’s interests in learning or understand and respond to their learning aptitude”

for the language and culture. I started to narrow down my focus on teachers after the initial conversation with parents. My thesis will have a focused discussion on how these teachers take on their teaching identity in addition to that of parent or community member. In the context of the Chinese language school, they, whether consciously or unconsciously, act as role models to the novice members of the speech community. I will also discuss how their teaching identities are restrained in the institutional discourse (Chapter 4 and 5).

The issue of meaning in language is also related to “communicative competency,” as argued by Hymes (1972:277-278; 1974:75). It shifts the perspective on language from codes and systems of communication to a set of beliefs and behaviors about language and the shared linguistic and cultural knowledge of how to use them (see more discussion in Chapter 2). I include a discussion of varied referents of “Chineseness” that emerged from my interaction with my informants (Chapter 3). I should clarify that I use the term “Chineseness” not in an essentialist way but as an aggregated referent or framework to explore the multi-level meanings of being a Chinese, as words offer starting points to understand and experience the external social-cultural environment. Here is one more example from my own Canadian experience. After coming to Canada as a landed immigrant in 2003, new terms such as “visible minority⁴” and “multiculturalism” became more and more integrated into my daily vocabulary. The abstract terms of “Chinese” and “visible minority” seem to represent two poles of Chinese in the diasporic community. The longer I study, live and work in Canada, the more my experiences or practice of being a “Chinese” in Canada sheds new light on these words. The reciprocal relationship between language and practices pushes the envelope of my new understanding of the formerly too-

⁴ The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as ‘persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in color.’

familiar term “Chinese”. In Chapter 3, 4 and 5, I discuss and argue that the meaning of “Chineseness” is constituted in the practices of “doing” language, specifically in the form of teaching Chinese as heritage language.

These contexts I describe above ultimately led me to my full-fledged thesis project. To re-iterate, the purpose of my research in the first place is to investigate how the practice of teaching Mandarin (heritage language) becomes a form for formulating and negotiating a Chinese cultural identity for Chinese immigrants in diaspora. The Chinese community in diaspora is further contextualized in Canada’s multiculturalism. Having been trained in cultural anthropology, I have enjoyed great opportunities as well as challenges in making sense of what is said and what is done by cultural and social actors, in order to meaningfully connect the dots.

I started off my intellectual exploration by teasing out a set of theoretical or conceptual domains from the above overarching question. Three theoretical themes inform a conceptual ecology of my research: language, cultural identity and Chineseness. My theoretical position is articulated in Chapter One, in which I spell out how I became aware of these interrelated theoretical or conceptual domains before entering the field. I revisit and rethink a few guiding concepts under the three themes that include: 1) “Ethnography of speaking or communication” which is theorized by linguistic anthropologists such as Dell Hymes (1974; Bauman and Sherzer, 1975), 2) the notion of “cultural identity” as proposed by cultural theorists including Stuart Hall (1990; 1996) and Ien Ang (1993; 1998; 2001). In my analysis, I will adopt the “Ethnography of Speaking” theoretical standpoint in linguistic anthropology by focusing on the context instead of text or content of language, which is viewed as a lived and practiced entity, as well as Stuart Hall’s positing of identity as a process of becoming, or of points of identification. Hall theorizes cultural identity and diasporic

identity as “a *‘production’*, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted, not outside but within representation”(1990, 222). Leveraging the scholarship of these theorists led to more focused research questions including: What constitutes Chinese cultural identity in the practices of heritage language teaching/learning? How is the notion of “Chineseness” perceived and experienced by the practitioners of heritage language teaching? What and how do subjective experiences weigh on the negotiation and articulation of Chinese cultural identity? How will the mundane practices of teaching Chinese among Chinese subjects at one micro-level place and/or space (of dwelling) reflect the scenes of migration, immigration, and travel at a macro-level? I ask these questions to problematize the assumptions of cultural identity in diaspora rather than taking a fixed view of, or reductively oscillating between, the “route” and “rootedness” to borrow Clifford’s words (1997:245-177). Meanwhile, I have found that a literature review in ethnographic research does not serve to establish a theoretical framework merely for the researcher’s further validation in the field. It serves rather as a bridge that informs my research practices at the later stages of fieldwork and ethnographic analysis.

The explorative nature of my research questions compels me to choose ethnography as the prime methodology for my research. As I became more curious about alternative explanations of Chinese cultural identity in the heritage language teaching/learning, and the practices of identification via heritage language, the method of ethnography through participant observation became more of a fit in my research scenario. Ethnography’s advantage is in offering researchers the opportunity to take on both “-emic” and “-etic” positions or perspectives (Erickson and Murphy 2003:115; Bernard 2002:429-430), and to compare different conceptualizations, explanations and interpretations of cultural practices and their meanings, shared or not, by both the

researchers and the informants. Moreover, the ethnographic researcher acts as an intervention in the social research process, an issue that cannot be eluded or ignored otherwise by a close examination and reflection on the research process. What is the role of ethnographic research in knowledge creation and sharing? I grappled with this methodological issue by contextualizing the process of translating and communicating my research agenda on Chineseness to my informants in the fieldwork. I discuss these challenges in Chapter Three. I ruminated on and analyzed the research process by exposing a multi-level effect of translation and interpretation among all research subjects on each stage of the research. The analysis was furthered by leveraging Brigg's argument of the interview as "a communicative event" (1986). I argue that cultural understanding can be seen through a similar process of translation. Translating the notion of Chineseness is not only a methodological issue, but also something that is deeply embedded in the ethnographic research itself that encapsulates the intricacy of multivocalities of symbolic words. Through the perspective of a microcosmic lens, the notion of Chineseness is not an objectified social, cultural or intellectual concept but rather an inter-subjective construct depending on the various contexts in which the ethnographer uses the concept (see Chapter 3: On Methodology, From Seminar Room to Fieldwork).

I conducted my participant observation in one of what is generally known as "Chinese Language Schools" in Ottawa during the period from September 2008 to May 2009. My fieldwork consisted of the conventional participant observation conducted by many generations of anthropologists since Malinowski's time, which includes interacting with people in the school, building rapport through interactions, observing activities, participating in school events, and taking notes on what was happening in the field. Of significant weight in participant observation was my taking

the role of weekly “Supply Instructor” for two school terms. By doing all of these activities, I ventured into new levels of understanding of what constitutes ethnic identity through language-mediated activities, specifically teaching from an insider’s perspective (practitioners of heritage language teaching). Employing an ethnographic approach enables me to tease out both the sensual and contextual forces that are intertwined with the construction of diasporic identity and the performance of Chineseness in a dynamic sense. These experiences add up to a significant portion of my ethnographic data for further analyses (see Chapter 4: A Chinese Language School under the Program of International Languages, and Chapter 5: Articulating and Performing Chineseness in teaching). What also defines my ethnography includes quotes, anecdotes, and stories of encounters.

In this thesis, I argue that to practice teaching Mandarin as a heritage language involves articulating and performing Chinese cultural identity among Chinese in diaspora. The construction of cultural identity in diaspora through language-mediated practices is an on-going communicative process that has its manifestation in the agency of the individual. The Mandarin language teachers engage questions about their Chinese cultural identities through their varied articulations and performances. As the notion of Chinese cultural identity becomes problematic for the teachers to be understood as a unity, the notion of “Chineseness” is, therefore, not a fixed entity in a single dimension of the Mandarin speech community context.

Employing such a microcosmic lens enables me to highlight the voices of key informants I become involved with in the research and heritage language program. Those key informants who were “being there” with me in the fieldwork are indeed my epistemic partners in research rather than simply interviewees or respondents (Marcus 2007). The ethnographic journey allowed “us” to “discover” many moments of

“intimacies” in the construction and negotiation of being a Chinese. Micro-conditions are revealed including the trans-lingual (English, French, Mandarin and various dialects of Chinese) and the practices of personal narration in identity formation and/or re-presentation(s). At the same time, this thesis project reflects the tendency to which the informants as cultural subjects also engaged in cultural identification, and the degree of personal reflection in social encounters. The research manifests a contingency between subjective and objective knowledge created both by the researcher and his or her research participants, or collaborators. Various levels of interpretation and understanding have taken place during this “rite of passage” of my anthropological learning. This research also has gone through its stages of evolution, transformation as well as stagnation. In the final chapter (Chapter 6), I discuss the contribution of my research, and point to directions for further research.

Chapter 2 In Theory

“Thinking about language from the perspective of the individual requires a pragmatics that deals centrally with newness and idiosyncrasy rather than a pragmatics in which conventionality is the focus.”

-- Barbara Johnstone, *The Linguistic Individual* (1996,19)

An interdisciplinary interest in the boundaries of cultural identity among Chinese immigrants

Aiming to respond to the broader issue of the everyday negotiation and performance of identity via language that constitutes the immigrant’s place in his or her community, this literature review addresses three theoretical streams thematically related to the broader research objective: first, language and culture, second, community in diaspora and multiculturalism, and third, ethnic and cultural identity. These three theoretical themes served to orient my research landscape on the topic before my entry into the field. Taking a root in my disciplinary training in cultural anthropology and the acknowledgement of the nature of ethnographic research with aims to re-visit certain categories and concepts in relation to language, identity and Chineseness, I argue that this literature review is not intended to set up a theoretical structure for validation in the fieldwork. The question of “what things could be otherwise” has always been at the forefront in scrutinizing new horizons of research and asking fresh questions.

In other words, my literature review serves as a bridge leading to the following research practices rather than a theoretical establishment to be stuck with. This chapter is intended to carve out an openness that welcomes fieldwork experiences. The theoretical assumptions of the theories reviewed are particularly attended to, as the notion of adequacy, a sense of completeness and incompleteness in theory building, is

imperative for an ethnographic work. Moreover, the depth of cultural knowledge demands to be grasped explicitly and contextualized as I espouse an interpretative framework of “thick description” (Geertz 1973:1-30) for my research. In his renowned analysis of the Balinese cockfight, Geertz theorizes “thick description” with an example of a “wink of the eyes”. He argues that a phenomenological understanding of culture is required to interpret contextually embedded gestures such as a wink - its meaning is not obvious to the outside observer, but its full of meaning is to the culturally situated observer. Last but not the least, while the post-modern critique of cultural-as-text approach (Clifford and Marcus 1986) problematizes the literary qualities in social and cultural science as well as the power relation between the researcher and the researched, critics admit the interpretations and representation of meanings are highly contestable.

Language and Culture

Historically, queries into the relationship between language and culture have been situated within multiple disciplines including linguistics, social linguistics, cognitive psychology, anthropology and linguistic anthropology. Although both social linguists and linguistic anthropologists are grounded in understanding language and speech in socio-cultural contexts, linguistic anthropologists have distinguished themselves from linguists by focusing their interests on those “mundane” communicative interactions among real people in the space of everyday life – the use of the language, as compared to linguists’ focus on speakers’ thoughts, judgments and behaviors of the grammaticality of language and linguistic forms (Duranti 2003; Keating 2000; Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2008).

“Speech community” is an enduring concept in the study of sociolinguistics or the anthropology of language. Morgan (1999; 2006) featured a focused discussion on

the evolution of the concept. Morgan traces speech community back to Bloomfield's formulation of "a group of people who use the same set of speech signals" (1933:29). On the one hand, Bloomfield's use of the concept focused exclusively on language as a linguistic code rather than the role of language in social interaction. On the other hand, this conception of how speech community related to language also had a comparatively rigid sense of boundary, indexing a static physical location for the group of people. Early conceptions assumed a shared single language within a single community at certain geographical location, for example talking about the Chinese nation as a speech community. As a consequence, the concept manifested itself to a larger extent in such nationalist language ideology as "one nation one people one language" (Anderson 1983; Simpson 2007). DeFrancis (1950) and Chen (2007) explored the discourses, institution and policy practices of the "naturalization" of a unified, standard, and modernized language in China as part of the young nation's building process since the May Fourth Movement in 1919 (see more discussion of May Fourth Movement and language reforms in Chapter 3). This rigidity is greatly due, however, to the confinements of theoretical development of the time. The role of language in post-colonial nation building parallels this ideological paradox in other contexts (Heller 2007:1-22).

The evolution of the notion of speech community has historically paralleled the most enduring theoretical framework in linguistic anthropology, which is linguistic relativity, also known as the "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis". The hypothesis of linguistic relativity proposes that the particular language we speak influences the way we think about reality (Sapir 1964; Lucy 1997). Whorf attempted to show that the language of the Hopi (a group of indigenous Native American people) shaped their experiential perception of the external world, since in Hopi language there are no distinctive forms

and words like English in describing time and space. The foundation of linguistic relativity later came under ferocious theoretical attack from the model of “deep structure” (Chomsky 1975), which is based on a comparatively rigid and mathematical approach to analyzing native speakers’ capacity to produce language that is free from context. Speech community later gained an opportunity to restore its utility by shifting its analytical canon from linguistic form or code to a wider theoretical frame of reference known as the “ethnography of communication” (Hymes 1974; Morgan 2004). Ethnography of communication places primacy on means over ends, context over content, competency over capacity, and communicative interaction over individual speech. Departing from Saussurean linguistics, Hymes recognizes that the language is organized as part of “communicative conduct” of communities (1974:9). According to Hymes, language is not linguistic codes simply responsive to social activities/events in Saussurean linguistic system (Saussure 1966); it is embedded in the social activities/events and constitutes the social activities/events. This means that there is much more to communication than words and signs. As Hymes wrote:

“...(O)ne can not take linguistic form, a given code or even speech itself, as a limiting frame of reference. One must take as context a community, or network of persons, investigating its communicative activities as a whole, so that any use of channel and code takes its place as part of the resources upon which the member draw.” (1974:4)

What can be derived from this theoretical orientation is a broadening of the understanding of the nature of language not only as a symbolic entity open for layers of interpretation, but also as an indexical system dependent on communicative interaction (Hanks 1999). It places the members of a speech community in the centre of the communication. Speech community can be understood as an inclusion of social and cultural representations in values, attitudes, ideologies and practices with regard to language. Thus, the Chinese nation, or Chinese netizens, or Chinese female workers

working an assembly line can all be understood as members of a speech community. The scholarship of “the ethnography of speaking” or “the ethnography of communication” makes a specific contribution to capturing the nature of language essentially as a communicative phenomenon. Methodological approaches were therefore proposed including the analysis of “communicative events”, and “communicative competency”. A number of orientations towards language have been changed. Communication can now be understood in terms of intention, context, form, gist, tone, and the relation of power among interlocutors as a whole. For example, “communicative competency” emphasizes the ability to participate in social and cultural life not only as a speaker, but also as a communicating member, for both the novice and experienced. Different “communicative events” require different performances on the part of its interlocutors. For Hymes,

“In short, primacy of speech to code, function to structure, context to message, the appropriate to the arbitrary or simply possible; but interrelations always essential, so that one can’t only generalize the particularities, but also particularize the generalities.” (1974:9)

The paradigmatic change accompanying the “communicative event or competency” turn has been to call attention to the dynamism and interaction among participants in communication in creating a, homogenous or not, community and identity. Studies have shown how people navigate, negotiate and present to others different categories (race, ethnicity, and gender) in a variety of ways in social interaction and communication (Urciuoli 1996; Hall and Bucholtz 1995). My project will contribute to the scholarship with a fine-grained interpretation of the constitution of Chinese cultural identity reflected in practices of heritage language teaching.

Morgan’s definition of speech community, which refers to “speakers who participate in interactions based on social and norms and values that are regulated,

represented, and recreated through discursive practices” (1999), is promising in exploring communicative participants’ agentive role. Morgan’s conception assumes members’ participation in communicative interactions. The concept of speech community can be viewed as a strategy to analyze how people “who operate within shared belief and value systems regarding their own culture, society, and history as well as their communication with others” construct their communities or world they live in everyday through language (Morgan 2004). It can be a solution to the problem of analyzing groups of speakers that escapes the highly politicized questions of what constitutes language, or a dialect, or a sub-dialect. Building on this conception, I investigate the dynamism in describing identities-at-work in a speech community with its relation to members’ agency. Two factors will be examined, one pointing to language ideologies and hegemony that normalize and neutralize various discourses in the field, and the other pointing to a highly situational and contextual negotiation of meaning based on interlocutors’ trajectories, perception, experiences and ongoing shifting of frames of reference in communication. This research focuses on how the teachers utilize both their transnational and local knowledge resources to define, create, negotiate and practice a space of meanings situated in one language school, and how their practice of teaching informs or transforms their construction of ethnic identity. In the end, my research recognizes the language school as a speech community through its members’ own terms and discursive practices.

Chinese Communities in Diaspora and Multiculturalism

Diaspora is a term originally associated with Jews in exile and now applied broadly to groups of migrants (or immigrants) living outside of their homeland (Cohen 1997; Safran 1991 and 2005). The term describes a state of dispersion, covering a multitude of ethnic, religious groups or different categories of people, which

presupposes a collectivity among diasporic members as opposed to differences among them. The concept of diaspora has generated a discursive meaning of a (dis)connection of diasporic communities' relationship either to the host land or the homeland, with a contextual reference to subjective imagination either in the formation of the nation-state (Anderson 1991), or in the transcendence in transnational spaces (Appadurai 1996:1-6). This predicament has applied to Chinese in diaspora over the centuries. Zhou (2005), Pan (1990) and Wang (1992)'s historical accounts accomplish a more complete sketch of the dispersion of Chinese immigrants shaped by a wide range of structural factors including geo-political, economic, and social factors across geographical borders; while Li (1988 and 1999) and Wickberg et al. (1982) have researched the Chinese in Canada with a focus on both the structural factors and the formation of social organization and communities in Canada.

My review of current literature on Chinese in diaspora in Canada is broadly divided into two categories along the axes of time and state policy. By placing the primacy of the structural factors with a reference to immigration policies, I will adopt a common periodization of an early era of "overt racism" era followed by the rise of multiculturalism and an era of "covert racism" respectively. The two eras entail both similar yet different articulations of racism, ethnicity, and cultural identity towards the Chinese immigrant group. If the earlier era of "overt racism" towards Chinese was characterized by openly race-based prejudice in society, the more recent era is described by scholars as one enshrining the principle of equality in law but yet still haunted by persisting race-based disadvantages (Li 2002). It is an era underlined by the rise of multiculturalism and its impact on the present situation of immigrants and the formation of diasporic communities in host countries, although such a schematic periodization is crude and glosses over the complexities of social and cultural realities.

I will specifically frame a context after 1967, which is the year Canada started employing a universal point system in immigration law that eradicated the restriction of immigration based on racial background (Li 2002).

Discourses of diaspora reveal a predicament of the teleological dichotomy of rootedness/rootedness-less, there/here, and centre/periphery, where “rootedness”, “there” and “centre” have always held more weight over “rootless”, “here” and “periphery”. Tu’s influential proposition of “Cultural China” as the periphery or de-centered centre (1991:1-32) is disguised in the logic of centered-ness, projecting the image of a single Chinese diaspora. For Chinese in diasporic communities, during the decades prior to 1967, members of the Chinese community in diaspora tended to show a loyalty or adherence to the centre, the homeland through their various ties or links with China, either via complex communities including clan, kinship or trading networks, or by homogenous Confucian cultural values or characteristics (Li 1998, Wickberg et al. 1998). After 1967, a gap between the centre and periphery became prominent in the emerging context of transnationalism. In public discourse, the political and social environment of multiculturalism has promoted the maintenance of cultural heritage, at both the individual and ethnic group levels, and cultural representation for recognition. In non-public sphere, for example the family domain, a “cultural difference” between the first generation and second generation of Chinese migrants is noted which coincides with the era of multiculturalism (Isajiw, 1999:171-197). A choice between sojourning/return, and settling/dwelling creates a constant tension in the individuals’ psyche of diaspora in particular that of the first generation of Chinese immigrants who have experienced a prosperous China especially since 1992, the year in which Deng Xiaoping conducted his “Southern Tour” to pave the way for economic reform in China. The tension in this new situation (a more and

more politically influential and economically prosperous China) is present in understanding the mindsets of the teacher and parents I encountered at the Chinese language school. To analyze the coherence/gap between discourse and practice, I will invoke Hall's proposition on the relationship between the two. As Hall states: *"Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But it is itself produced by a practice: 'discursive practice' – the practice of producing meaning. Since all social practices entail meaning, all practices have a discursive aspect. So discourse enters the influences of all social practices"* (1996:201-202).

As multicultural policy became more prevalent, analyses of Chinese communities in diaspora have ventured into mapping different spatial-social communities in the host society or host country other than the former enclaves of "Chinatowns". Due to the changes in the composition of Canada's immigrant population, Chinese communities take on new characteristics. For example, they are spreading into suburban middle-class neighborhoods. Chinese communities in diaspora are also being transformed into more open communities where there is an array of new community organizations, most of which take the forms of ethnic language schools, ethnic religious institutions, ethnic media, and cultural agencies. This new cluster of communities can be described using the term "cultural community", a term proposed by Ling based on her studies in St. Louis (2004). Ling observed that new diasporic communities were starting to emerge and disperse to suburban areas beyond the boundaries of old Chinatown. They can be seen as a cluster of many types of social institution or community organizations including Chinese language schools, which therefore foster a cultural and emotional space out of practices within these social boundaries (170-182). Ling is concerned with the impact of the geography on the shape of the Chinese community, and suggests that a cultural

community marked by social and emotional boundaries instead of physical boundaries might involve diasporic Chinese's ascription to their ethnic membership and identity. The implication that cultural community tends to take root resonates with Tu's proposition of "Cultural China" that is previously discussed.

There is a third, more fluid approach to studying cultures and communities of Chinese diaspora by focusing on experiences of displacement across transnational borders and identity politics in host countries (Louie 2000; Ang 2001; Ong 1999). These analyses focus on the positions of subjects taken in the continuous flux of migration in an information age along various points of time and space (Clifford 1997). Louie's research draws on a cultural event called "In Search of Roots" organized by both Chinese and overseas institutions oriented towards overseas Chinese youth. Louie exposes an Americanized, or Chinese American or Asian American, way to seek membership in a re-territorialized nation and/or transnational community. Ang interrogates the ambiguity of being a so-called "Chinese" as both an academic intellectual and *peranakan* Chinese⁵ in Indonesia who have few ties with their ancestral land and usually speak no Chinese language (2001). Ong's (1999) study focuses on individual practices or strategies in specific regulatory, power and cultural-economic contexts.

While agreeing with Ling that the "Cultural Community" is defined more by social boundaries and less so by physical boundaries, the third, more fluid approach is central to my research. I offer a more anthropologically informed perspective as substantiation of Ling's definition of cultural community, which indicates that a sense

⁵ The term of "*peranakan*" Chinese generally applies to the ethnic Chinese population in the British Settlement Strait of Malaya, and the Dutch controlled islands of Java and the other locations in the area. They are descendants of Chinese who immigrated to this area as early as the late 15th and 16th centuries. Since they were born and bred in South- East Asia, they has partially or fully adapted and integrated into "native" customs and lifestyle. *Totok*, on the other hand, refers to those who arrived from China much later and generally had a closer tie with the ancestral homeland.

of community can be filtered through a newly woven culturescape. By using the ethnographic data gleaned from my fieldwork, I describe an interactive and constructive process of articulating cultural identity, metaphorically expressed in sensory notions of “root”, “emotional complex”, “nostalgia”, and “taste”. Ultimately, I intend to reveal the dynamics of multiple senses of belonging in the context of a Chinese language school as one spatial-social locality.

As discussed in the earlier section, multiculturalism is both a social context and supplies the analytical axes for my thesis project. The examination of multiculturalism provides a significant political and social context to probe the question of the modern-day migrant identity, framed by Gilroy (1990) as “where are they from?” Multiculturalism sets the context for the issue of settling and dwelling in the post-1967 world of globalization and transnational migration. In the liberal nations of North America and Australasia, multiculturalism can be seen as a discursive attempt to create a larger sense of community as a nation-state by allying with communities of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, specifically the ethnic-minority groups. Multiculturalism’s narrative, supported by its institutionalized policies, can be seen as the most plausible case among various hegemonic possibilities in contemporary immigrant society. Nowadays in Canada, the collective identities of certain ethnic groups are largely shaped through the grand narrative of “multiculturalism” that fosters diversified expression of ethnic cultural heritage. Gramsci’s notion of hegemony sheds light on the understanding of multiculturalism as the “mastering of history” by “using people’s will and agency” to “organize consent” in shaping a power structure (Smith 2004). Critics (Goldberg 1994:1-41) point out that there is also a role for intellectuals in fabricating hegemony. Aided by the intellectuals, chains of interconnected yet selective meanings from various hegemonic

possibilities are established to “organize consent”, and “consent is used to facilitate the securing of a political project aiming for “securing the future” (Smith 2004). Scholars also criticize institutionalized multiculturalism for its depoliticized process of assimilation, either by highlighting only various cultural expressions with claims and performances of “authenticity” underlined by identity politics, or suppressing the racial past in a time of the formation of nation-building (Ang 2001). By referring to the differences among various social, cultural or ethnic groups, policy-makers schematize those differences with a Euro-centric logic of essentializing cultural differences and, as a consequence, “any sense of hybridity or heterogeneity is lost” (Lentin 2005). Even within the post-modern articulation of an anti-essentialist paradigm, scholarship on diasporic communities has nevertheless been constrained by pre-cultured “-nesses”, for example American-ness, Chineseness, over subjects’ conditions. There is a need to push the level of community further to the individual level to examine the concept of identity and the process of identification.

It is observed that ethnic language has been predominantly used as the home language among the first generation of Chinese immigrants (Li 1998:107-117). Linked to the thematic domain of multiculturalism and bilingual or multilingual language policies, ethnic or heritage language programs grow right out of the multicultural ethos and the policy environment. Next to English and French, ethnic or heritage languages become visible or audible through a process of institutionalization, and a process of Canadianization emerges, producing Canadian identity, although the teaching and learning of ethnic languages are not a new phenomenon among diasporic communities. Ethnic or heritage language programs at a community level have been in play for over forty years among the descendents of diasporic or immigrant families before entering the school system (Cummin and Danesi 1990; Duff 2008).

Current literature on ethnic language teaching and learning in a multicultural society is largely preoccupied with pedagogical and linguistic issues, employing various analytical lenses from language as economic and cultural capital to education equality for minority children (Cummin & Danesi 1990:53-79). The climate at the macro-level contributes to much rationalization about drivers and motivations of learning a language other than English or French. Parents adopt practices of sending their children to language schools to be better exposed to, or acquainted with the language and culture. Literature concerning Chinese language-learning can be broadly divided into two types of research: 1) learner-focused research, and 2) teacher-focused research, the former being more prevalent than the latter. Examples of learner-focused studies range from exploring the attitudes towards heritage language among parents and children to the role of heritage language teaching and learning in bilingual and multilingual education systems (Anderson 2008; He 2001; Curdt-Christiansen 2008). Teacher-focused research examines teaching and professional identity among language teachers, which is, more often than not largely limited to linguistic and pedagogical concerns (Beynon et al 2003; Feuerverger 1997). Research has yet to provide a comprehensive answer to the question of the relationship between ethnic identity and teaching identity. Studies on heritage or ethnic language teachers in diasporic communities have yet to provide extensive analysis on them as agentive members in the context of the Chinese in diaspora. My thesis project aims to fill in this gap to understand ethnicity and identity negotiation in this regard.

Ethnic and Cultural Identity

In terms of the social or cultural changes that are going on at a macro level, how is cultural identity among the Chinese in diaspora affected on an individual level? Due to the global structures of political and economic capital, trajectories of migration

tend to follow routes from Asian societies, which are often perceived to be more collectivist, to western societies like North American, which are perceived to be more individualistic. Contributing to the perception of collectivity, the displacement associated with migration and the comparative absence of social connectivity in a culturally specific way is heightened. Chinese might be still viewed as those who bind themselves together in the community and lack a sense of belonging to the host country. Furthermore, with increasing transnational migration and information flows, the issue of identity is intertwined with choices of lifestyle and the politics of those choices (Giddens 1991). Immigration exemplifies one of the choices of lifestyle and strategies of living a better life. What are the subsequent and emerging constructions of Chinese cultural identity on the residuals from one's cultural heritage? Through what avenues are cultural identities expressed and negotiated in an everyday context of teaching Chinese as heritage language? What practices or actions are taken to negotiate the cultural identity or sense of belonging not only with other members in the community but also with self? The impetus for this avenue of research is to reveal the tension underlying microcosmic conditions, and to determine to what extent it can shape the microcosm of the construction of ethnic or cultural identity.

The term "identity" enjoys great popularity in both academic and everyday discourse. There are many critical discussions about whether identity is an adequate concept to deal with social and cultural analysis (Handler 1994; Bauman 1996; Hall 1990 and 1996; Brubaker and Cooper 2000). No matter what positions are taken by scholars regarding identity of a semantic significance either with psychoanalytical concerns or that of identity politics, a general consensus has been reached that the concept of identity bears a multivalent burden. Does Chinese cultural identity become more pronounced after the point of difference within the settings of family and

community first? What is the relationship between personal identity and collective identity that crosses over each domain at certain points of time and space?

Stuart Hall's theorization of cultural identity against the discourses of origin, history and culture sheds some light in this regard. According to Stuart Hall, cultural identity, in particular that in a diasporic setting, is "a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'" (Hall 1990:225). Cultural identities, he continues: "like everything is historical, they undergo constant transformation. ...identities are the names we give to the different ways we position by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. ... Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning*. Hence, the politics of identity is ever present, as is the politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental 'flow of origin'." (1990:225-226, emphasis added)

Identity is a product of social or political action in a context of modern nation-building. Cultural identity should not be treated as "an accomplished fact..." and is often understood and experienced "as a discovery and rediscovery of the 'past' or 'hidden history'" (Hall 1990:222-224). The notions of "imaginary recovery", "imaginative rediscovery", and "imaginary reunification" impose "an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation" (1990:224). Claiming "identities" through claims of rediscovering the 'hidden history', usually from 'profound research' by intellectuals, is one of the core strategies and positions in various social movements. It is a coherence that overshadows or even ignores the differences in narrating a "common" past. Hall argues that in speaking of identities one is most likely forced to render his or her answer to the question of "where are you coming from?" as well as to hold on to the very answer thereafter. In that case,

identities are merely names or labels given to “the different ways we are positioned by, and position us within the narratives of the past.” (1990:225). Therefore, cultural identities can be understood as representations of on-going personal histories.

Hall proposes a more ‘unsettling’ view to see identities by no means as “origins” or “essence”. The supposedly truer versions of identities are appropriated as a process of “positioning” and “continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power” despite of the “dominant regimes of representation”. They should be understood not only as “many points of similarities,” but also as “deep and significant differences” alongside “continuity” (224-226). Hall continues to untangle the complexity of identity by asking the question of “Who needs identity?” over “What is identity?” This leads to an exploration of the discursive practices among the subjects. According to Hall, identification should take priority over identity, as the former is understood as “a process of articulation...like all signifying practices” (Hall 1996:3). Hall writes:

“...a strategic and positional one...., identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation. [We] need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies. Moreover, [identities] emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity ...” (1996:3-4)

In a nutshell, Hall emphasizes the dynamism in the subjective experience and production of identity with orientations of being here, now, and towards the future. He proclaims the power at local space to shape the formation and differences in and of identity.

Critics have pointed out that although Hall’s conceptualization within the

paradigm of cultural studies' on identity is liberating, it remains at a theoretical and abstract level. The promise of hybrid theory lacks the support of empirical data gleaned from everyday practices (Harris 2009). There is a call for a more nuanced and especially a more ethnographically informed examination (Harris 2009), particularly under the conditions of the process of (re)construction, imitation or appropriation of identity in a microscopic dimension of power. Hall's theory does, however, create incentive for empirical research to explore new threads of identity negotiation. Exploring identity-in-practice beyond "textual or discursive identity" serves the purpose of meaning-making quite well among agentive subjects.

Ien Ang's "On not speaking Chinese" (1993; 1998) sheds light on the negotiation of cultural identity, which is contingent on the trajectories of individual migrants. A departure from the hegemonic proposition in the "De-centred center" discourse among scholars in diaspora (Tu 1991), Ang's work is an interrogation of the seemingly ontological stability of Chineseness and either radicalized or politicized certainty of Chinese identity. Ang's intellectual reflection on Chineseness as "*an open signifier which acquires its peculiar form and content in dialectical junction with the diverse local conditions in which ethnic Chinese people, ..., construct new, hybrid identities and communities.*" points to a re-examination of the dynamism of identity negotiation (1993:13). Ang (1993) calls for an "in-between-ness" of creatively autonomous, social and intellectual space for diasporic identity. Her advocacy of autonomously "living between Asia and the West" brings up a set of problems between ethnicity and language.

Following Ang's intellectual scrutiny on the nuances in meanings of being Chinese, I continue to ask the questions: Is the "in-between-ness" necessarily limited only to those in the academic circle? What about the average person in a diasporic

situation? Do normal Chinese in diaspora or immigrants ever doubt the so-called notion of Chineseness, especially in their discursive practices of speaking Chinese? If so, what are the conditions and how are normal groups of Chinese people in diaspora living in such a space of “in-betweenness”? How do Chinese immigrants negotiate and construct such a living space through speaking Chinese?

The question of subjective experiences of identity negotiation and articulation at the intersection of language and culture creates new intellectual spaces. Critical analyses of the negotiation and articulation of identity in the hegemony of assimilationist states (Hall 1996; Clifford 1988:250) serve to guide me through a continuous quest in the shaping of cultural identity through language. Will the mundane practices among subjects at dwelling places and spaces reflect migration, travel, encounters and interactions across such geographical places, and/or imaginary space as nation-states? The question problematizes the assumptions of either “route over rootedness, or “rooted-ness over route” with increasing urgency. The weight of authenticity exclusively attached to one place/space and/or one language over inauthenticity and hybridity, or vice versa, is called to be challenged (Clifford 1988; 1994).

Summary

The literature review has focused on three themes: 1) speech community, 2) Chinese community in diaspora and 3) multiculturalism and cultural identity. It expands to a more succinct question of being the same or different from a core set of referential meanings, or not, of Chineseness in communicative interaction. Whether it is an analytical strategy or conceptual unit of study in studying language in culture and society, speech community overlaps with some physical and geographic location and

can be “a symbolic entity that both creates and indexes its existence as a hidden product of society and the institutional structure.”(Morgan 2004). As the social and cultural life of humans is characterized by the continuous and fluid interaction and communication among subjects, constant communication adds to the complexity of answering the questions of self and culture, and the significance of historically and socially developed systems of meanings of human activities (Lucy 1996:39). Ideologies of language and cultural knowledge also complicate language use as speakers bring their understanding of language to bear on regimenting their practice (Gal 1989; Lucy 1996; Silverstein 1979).

Thanks to the huge population of Chinese speakers, Chinese speech communities in diaspora encounter few of the challenges faced by, for example, aboriginal communities’ in salvaging language in the form of heritage language programs. Nevertheless, a gap still exists as far as to what degree the communicative or contextual reference on language and culture is shared and relied on; how does the notion of Chineseness serve as a common ground in marking their ethnic or diasporic identity from a everyday perspective? In an era of a growing population of transnational migrants, is there a prolific formation going on of social and cultural communities in diaspora against an imagined community of “home”? My nuanced examination of how a group of community members represent and mark their Chinese identity to a group of heritage language learners who have limited experience of cultural and language knowledge shed some light on this question.

In summary, I will concentrate on specific beliefs, practices, activities, and social interactions among the members in the community that are organized and informed by community and Chinese Language Programs. I aim to tease out the forces or conditions, practices and experiences that are enmeshed in the making and

working of such a speech community. Ultimately, I intend to shed some light on how community is constructed as unique and different in fulfilling the needs and purpose in and through language teaching in representing one's ethnic and cultural identity. The research centers on otherwise taken-for-granted issues as Chinese language, Chineseness, Chinese identity, and Chinese culture in diaspora, all of which intertwine with dimensions of time and place. Ethnographic research methodology is designed to answer the research questions as adequately as possible considering limited time and resources.

Chapter 3: On Methodology: from Seminar Room to Fieldwork

Translatability is an essential quality of certain works, which is not to say that it is essential that they be translated; it means rather that a specific significance inherent in the original manifests itself in its translatability.

-- Walter Benjamin. *The Task of the Translator* (1968,71)

Ethnography is a salient methodology for advancing the analyses of the dynamic relationship between language and cultural practice on the part of participants. As discussed in earlier chapters, there are at least two advantages of an ethnographic methodology. First, it generates finite social and cultural situations that are rich in cultural practices. Second, it involves both the ethnographer and person-in-the-culture in various communicative situations to predict and judge what is appropriate or inappropriate, adequate or inadequate in cultural expression and/or behavior. This allows the researcher to take on both “-emic” and “-etic” positions, or perspectives (Erickson & Murphy 2008:138; Russell 2002:429-430) to compare different conceptualizations, explanations and interpretations of cultural practices and their meanings, shared or not, by both the researchers and the informants. Anthropological careers are intimately connected to the fate of the putative “experimental moments” (Darnell 2001:296-301; Marcus and Fischer 1986:ix), and “every individual project of ethnographic research and writing is potentially experimental” (Marcus and Fischer 1986:116). While enjoying this openness in the nature of ethnographic research, the ethnographer suffers great ambiguity and uncertainty in his or her *own rite of passage*.

My fieldwork was carried out at a heritage language school located in east Ottawa, Ontario, in an institutional environment (termed as a “site” in policy

discourse). I will call it “Hai Pi⁶” throughout the whole writing. The school was established in 1997, a time when the city of Ottawa was experiencing its second strongest growth of population since 1960. Between 1996 and 2001, Ottawa-Gatineau attracted almost 25,000 immigrants from around the world, among which the largest number (almost 7,000) came from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Immigrants who settle in Ottawa-Gatineau have a particular demographic profile. They are inclined to be attracted to Ottawa by high-paying professional jobs or post-secondary studies. Chinese immigrants in Ottawa are more educated, earn higher wages, and have higher levels of employment than those who settle in other cities in Canada. Although Ottawa’s Chinese community is the smallest of Canada’s five largest city centers⁷, it was Canada’s fastest growing Chinese community during the 1990s. According to the 2006 census, a total of 36,605 people in the Ottawa-Gatineau area claimed Chinese ethnic origin⁸. I will have a more adequate description and discussion of the school in Chapter Four, which is notably embedded in a complex relationship with the larger political, social and policy contexts of the communities. Now I will turn to a discussion on one significant issue I grappled with during the development of my project – the translation or interpretation of Chinese-ness. A spectrum of meanings of “Chineseness” was explored by translating the English term to a set of Chinese terms, ranging from “root (gen 根)” to “taste/flavor (weidao 味道)”. I will discuss the connotations of these translations, and the subtle influences of their use in my conversation with my informants later. Generally speaking, I use the term of

⁶ All the names used have been changed to protect the identities of the schools and participants. I have also used “Pinyin” as the romanized Chinese throughout the text. Simplified Chinese characters (as opposed to complicated Chinese characters commonly used in Hong Kong, and Taiwan) are also used in this thesis.

⁷ The other four cities are Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and Calgary.

⁸ Source: Statistic Canada, 2006 Census Population. Last modified 2009-8-14. Total number of visible minorities was counted as 794,170 in Ontario and 1,216,525 across Canada according to 2006 census.

“Chineseness” in this thesis not as an essentialist notion of cultural identity or belonging; instead, I speak or write the term to explore, question, negotiate, and challenge the meanings of it, while acknowledging the nature of words as symbolic entities with multi-faceted meanings. Before spelling out on that issue, I will discuss right away the key research methodology, primarily including participant observation and key-informant interviews, as communicative events that involve translation (in a metaphorical sense and as a practice) and interpretation embedded in a referential web of political, social, cultural and time-spatial meanings. My playing a role as a Mandarin teacher during the fieldwork also exemplifies the nature as such.

Key-informant interview as a communicative event

My use of participant observation as the principle methodology is embedded within other such methodological practices as developing interviewing protocols, jotting down fieldwork notes, socializing with other members in the school, and conducting interviews. My own practice of teaching has been an avenue for the collection of ethnographic data. In this section, I will offer a focused discussion of key-informant interviews in the context of ethnographic fieldwork, to tease out how the use of interviewing complicates the task of translation as discussed previously.

Interviewing is a common means of “acquiring” data in various research activities. Charles L. Briggs, in *Learning How to Ask* (1986), engaged in a critical examination on the nature of the interviewing technique. Briggs’ work led to an in-depth understanding of how the interview acts as a “communicative event”, and how the significance of “the role of context” while interviewing in ethnographic research is especially “revealing” to the communicative underpinning of ethnographic interviews (8). Procedural problems therefore exist, which Briggs refers to as the “communicative blunders” that impede or even jeopardize the interview process (40-

60). According to Briggs, each interview is “an unique social interaction that involves “thorny issues” to deal with with respect to the reliability and validity of ethnographic and qualitative research (Briggs 1986, 23-24). Briggs argues that context is “a phenomenological construct that is created jointly by the participants”. As Briggs wrote, contexts are not “situational givens”, but “continuously renegotiated in the course of the interaction” (25). This notion of “context” and the interpretation of the context by interlocutors calls into question:

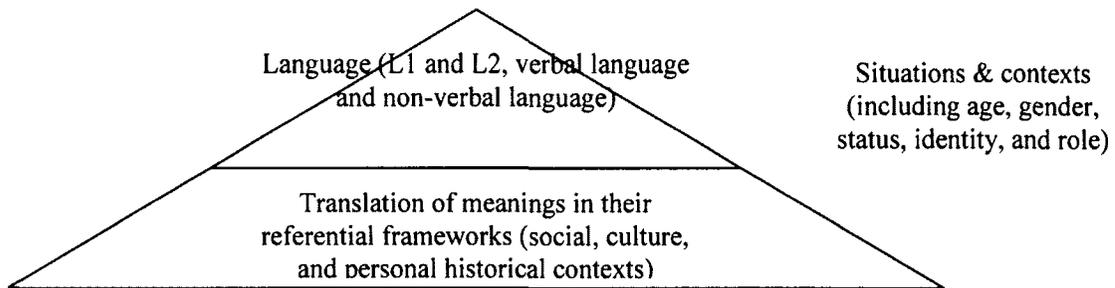
“... the naïve concept of the interview as the medium through which the respondents’ attitudes and beliefs are conveyed to the reader. The interview rather stands as a co-participant in the construction of a discourse. This view also challenges received procedures for the interpretation of interview data.” (25)

I will present an abundance of such contexts out of my encounters and interactions in the field in the following chapters. For now, I mention briefly how my research role paralleled my role as a language teacher. I had taught as a supply teacher for more than ten weeks, teaching classes that ranged from kindergarten, and grades 7 and 8 to a Special Class (a mix of both adults and children at different ages). At the time I said yes to Principal Ping when she asked me if I was willing to teach, she also told me “you are the performer in the classroom”. In retrospect, I did not understand well the meaning of “performer”. After spending hours on the lesson plan, facilitating discussion in the classroom, conversing with students, and observing and reflecting on the classroom experience, I came to be more conscious about my research as well as my own version of appropriation. My teaching experiences have become a significant contextual factor in all my key informant interviews.

My key informants’ interviews with teachers were preceded by informal chats with parents and children in the school. After that, I basically left it to my informants to choose a place for a more focused conversation. Almost all interviews turned out to

be either at my informants' home, or in public places such as Tim Hortons coffee and doughnut stores. Most of my informants were female, over forty years old, and I found some of them who did not have daytime jobs were more easily accessible than others. I also had interviewed some of my informants more than once. These informants had opportunities to know more about me, including for example my family, my immigration experiences, and asked me more questions with regard to my research than those I interviewed once. Those informants I "hung out" with more than once often shared with me an "aha" expression. They came to think of and understood better my research by engaging in understanding my research and questions, which more likely rendered them particularly sensitive to the representation of Chineseness around them. When I presented my "curiosities" by closing my eyes, sniffing into the air, and ask: "what does the Chineseness taste or smell like?" my informants seemed to respond more readily with their stories of dining at Chinese restaurants, or emotions while reciting Chinese ancient poems. Besides the research data gathered from the interview, it is the actors, or interlocutors involved in the interviews, who observe the "context" of an interview, its process, and who synthesize clusters of communicative information including age, role, gender, status identity, gleaned from their own referential framework of meanings, and "translate" to each other. Taking the interview as a communicative event into consideration, the task of translation becomes a multifaceted social practice. Translation is not limited to translating between literal meanings but meanings in their social and cultural referential frameworks. Translation is not a trope but the whole practice of social interaction in the interview event (Illustration 1).

Illustration 1: Layers of translation



I have discussed how the methodology of the interview underlies the production of research data. In the following section, I will substantiate it with more ethnographic interviewing experience. I try to reveal how I approached the concept of Chineseness at different methodological stages, and contextualize how my understanding, translation and interpretation of Chineseness frame my fieldwork experiences, and analytical sophistication. I want to reveal how the concept of Chineseness is co-constructed by both me as the researcher and the informants, which manifests at different layers of translation. The theoretical position of co-construction will recur in the process of ethnographic data analysis (Chapter 4 and 5). The ethnographer's or fieldworker's communicative practices with informants are intertwined with fieldworkers' at-the-moment pre-assumption and understanding of the observed, as well as the situational judgment on both the referential and indexical significance of communication. This is acknowledged in the notion of co-temporality that constitutes the "objects" in anthropology (Fabian 1983 and 2007). An awareness of "coevalness" and "joint performance" among subjects has to be recognized and articulated in the (re)production of ethnographic knowledge. The fieldworker who plays a keen yet privileged role in the mode of interaction with the informants during participant observation and interviews constitutes the productivity of the research. The

ethnographic encounter should be construed as the product of multi-layered meanings of words in communicative practices.

“Translating” and/or interpreting Chineseness, from seminar room to fieldwork

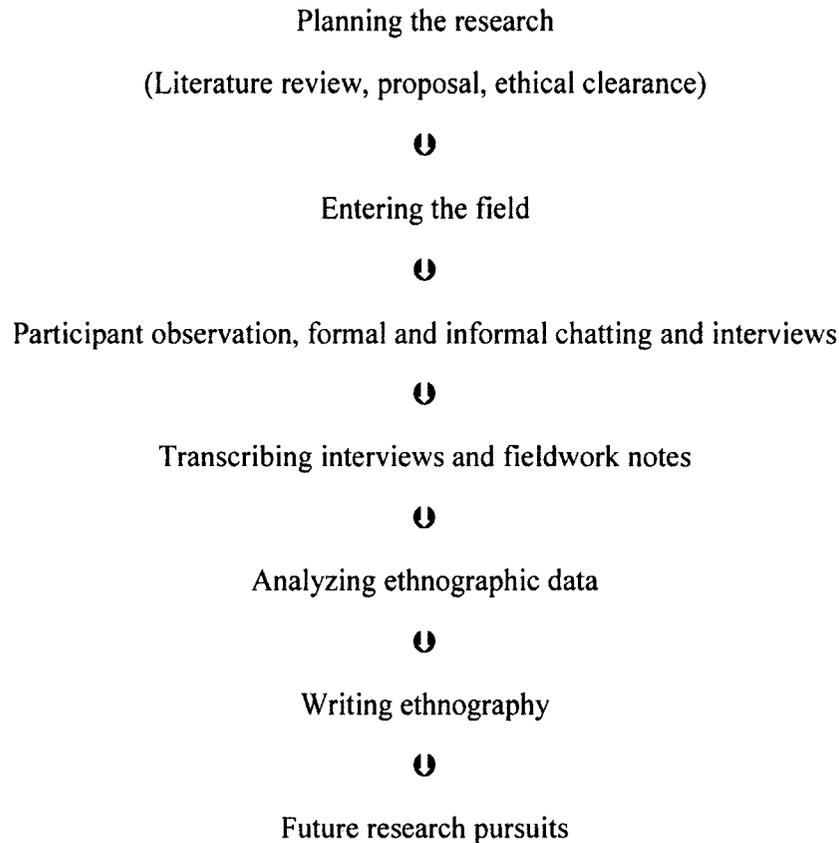
As both an academic researcher studying the relationship between speech community and Chineseness, and a cultural insider born and raised in the same language community (Mandarin) where I was conducting the participant observations and interviews, I started with the essential but challenging task of translating between specific sets of terms and references. These challenges of choosing the right words and sentences to accurately express my research purpose and questions kicked in from the outset of my research. The ethnographic encounter with my informants makes translating between words and terms a constant practice, not only metaphorically, but also pragmatically. Stumbling through this task of translation, I found myself, from time to time, challenged in thoughts as well as speech to articulate my thoughts through two languages, specifically English and Mandarin, simultaneously and interchangeably. Translation of the term “Chineseness”, not as a linguistic code but as a words-in-use, is a practice constantly caught in suspension during the whole process of my research. In this chapter, I will present how the issue of translation emerged prominently in each stage of my ethnographic research, followed by a discussion on the (un)translatability of the notion of Chineseness in interviews as “a communicative event” (Briggs 1986). Stemming from Brigg’s thesis, I will therefore contextualize the process of my fieldwork interviews by presenting various communicative meanings of “Chineseness”, among other meanings to my informants. What is an appropriate definition of Chineseness, and how can being Chinese be depicted? How can it be exemplified and then described for someone like my informants who may not understand my research agenda as I do? How can it be explained and translated back

for my academic peers, many of whom neither speak the language nor understand the culture as cultural insiders do? The generation of a set of terms describing Chineseness turned out to be the initial impetus for the research. At the end of this chapter, I attempt to argue that studying and communicating the notion of Chineseness to my informants is not only a methodological issue, but also something that is deeply embedded in the ethnographic research itself, encapsulating the intricacy and multivocality of symbolic words.

As discussed in earlier chapters, the notion of Chineseness is of central interest to me in this thesis project. Like any other social and cultural categorization, it is full of ambiguity. The question of what constitutes Chineseness is what my research endeavors to answer. As my research took off, the translation and interpretation of Chineseness became an issue immediately. The labour of articulating and communicating the notion of Chineseness is woven into every stage of the research, from research planning, preparing ethical clearance, developing an interview protocol, and being active in the field, not to mention each single instance of analyzing ethnographic data and doing the write-up (Figure 3.1). From a methodological point of view, the researcher in ethnographic research himself or herself becomes a research “instrument” that is committed to the labour of translation among many social, cultural or cross-cultural contexts. In many ways, this largely depends on with whom the researcher attempts to communicate. The labor of translation also involves the researcher’s embodied knowledge out of his or her personal life experience, understanding and individual notion of being Chinese together with other facets of cultural identity. Translation, according to Benjamin (1968), was constituted by its “translatability” in languages (70). A translation is closely connected to the original but has its own “manifestations of life” (71), which are “in the expression of its nature,

in the representation of its significance” (72).

Figure: 3.1: The translation of Chineseness underlines the whole process of this ethnographic research.



As a “Chinese” immigrant myself, I have developed many cultural assumptions about what it is to be a Chinese through both the language and practices. In hindsight, I assumed that being polite and humble is part of what it meant to be Chinese, particularly in the context of Chinese teacher-student relationship since teachers are historically and culturally viewed as figures of considerable esteem in Chinese society (also respecting the teacher as the one with authority). One Chinese maxim speaks to the prestige teachers enjoy: one should respect one’s teacher as if he were one’s father, even if the teacher-student relationship lasts for only one day. There is another analogous saying: it takes ten years to grow trees, while it takes a hundred years to

cultivate people⁹. I called every teacher in the school using the address form “Teacher X (surname)” to show my respect (other teachers also called me “Teacher Shen”). I also addressed parents in the school by “Y (name of the children) mama or baba” (mom or dad of Y). My referring to teachers and parents by using one’s title, position, or children’s name is common among Chinese people in social situations, as compared to using one’s first name directly, saying John, Samuel, or Grace, among English-speaking countries. On the contrary, young children (the so-called the second-generation of immigrants) are encouraged to use the first-name form of address frequently, if not more so than using a culturally specific address by using kin terms, like elder or younger brothers, elder or younger sisters. Nevertheless, the Chinese way of address put me in a pliable, humble, and less powerful position in the culturally hierarchical teacher-student relationship (it also helped to balance another hierarchical relationship, that of the researcher-informant), although this is often a figment of the anthropologist’s imagination). While speaking to my teacher informants, I also was inclined to use “nin” (a pronoun that refers to “you”, written as “您” that is often used to refer to senior people in age, or social status) instead of “ni” (a pronoun that also refers to “you”, usually addressed to people who are in the same age or social bracket, and those who are junior in age)¹⁰.

The communicative notion of Chineseness carries an academic cultural baggage for me. Theoretical concepts are discussed, critiqued and stretched by the pointers of the structural vs. the representational, historical convergence and divergence, nationalism and trans-nationalism, migration and transmigration, race, ethnicity, and

⁹ During the period of Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the occupation of teachers was viciously condemned. They were categorized as part of a bigger group known as “the intellectuals (zhizhi fenzi)” under “Stinky No. Nine (chou laojiu)”.

¹⁰ The written form of “nin” is “您” while “ni” is “你”. The bottom component of the word “nin”, which is the Chinese character of “heart” (xin) in writing symbolizes the etiquette in its reference.

identity. While it is the academic training that equipped me to formulate my questions in various ways in the field, my experiences from the field drove me to more academic literature for analyzing and interpreting the phenomena out of the field. On the one hand, the translation of Chineseness took on new meanings of significance, as either “roots (gen)” or “flavor (weidao)” emerging from the fieldwork (see more discussion in Chapter Three). On the other hand, the process of translation and interpretation of Chineseness also demands theorizing and synthesizing complex meanings, which relies on the categorization of my primary group of audiences, my academic cohorts, my professors and classmates in the seminar room, and the future audience of my research, myself included.

Another labour of translation involves the ethnographers’ ability to deal with the idea of a “street-smart translation” in the field, where the academic knowledge of Chineseness sometimes faded into the background. What is required in “a street-smart translation” is the communicative competence and skills for interacting socially in the studied community. The key task was to communicate the notion of Chineseness into a fairly colloquial language during my interactions with informants. This is also an issue of the operationalization of research. How can I make the notion of Chineseness more or less communicative in the field? Since I, as the ethnographer, come from the same cultural community, I had to take extra precautions to be aware of, and try to eliminate, cultural assumptions as much as I could, and reflect on these assumptions. The ethnographer’s task is to make “the familiar strange” and/or vice versa, in this case, significantly by translating the notion of “Chineseness” through various frames of reference.

The notion of Chineseness is understood not merely as an objectified concept but rather an inter-subjective construction depending on various social contexts in

which both the ethnographer and informants both use the concept. Small-c “chineseness” is a construct negotiated between interlocutors, as compared to “Big-C Chinese” that usually refers to a homogeneous, unified and fixed entity. The whole research process requires that the researcher be constantly thinking, practicing, and reflecting on the issue of translation in a wider sense. Before describing my work involving the task of translation with regard to the notion of Chinese, I will turn to Brigg’s examination of the nature of interviews - particularly ethnographic interviews.

The linguistic and conceptual shades of Chinese as an issue of translation and interpretation

Morphological rules dictate that the suffix of “-ness” forms a noun from an adjective denoting a state or condition. Before probing into the meaning of Chinese, the notion of “Chinese” has to be revisited and examined, in a pragmatic sense. From the Oxford Dictionary of English (2005), the entry of “Chinese” is defined by a linguistic consensus as something with a strong relation to its language and/or people, who are natives, citizens or persons of Chinese descent.

Chinese, *noun* (plural. same)

1. [Mass noun] the language of China.
2. A native or national of China, or a person of Chinese descent.

Chinese, a member of the Sino-Tibetan language family, is the world's most commonly spoken first language, with an estimated 1.2 billion native speakers worldwide. The script is logographic, using characters which originated as stylized pictographs but now also represent abstract concepts and the sounds of syllables. Though complex, it permits written communication between speakers of the many dialects, most of which are mutually incomprehensible in speech. For transliteration into the Roman alphabet, the Pinyin system is now usually used.

adjective

1. Relating to China or its language, culture, or people

2. Belonging to the people forming the dominant ethnic group of China and also widely dispersed elsewhere. Also called Han.

The lexical definition certainly manifests the intricate relationship between the meaning of “Chinese” and its language, referring to both its both spoken and written form. The English lexicon offers a means to define social reality, but there is always a more complex social reality of any certain speech community at a certain point of time and space. The dictionary explanation also excludes the individual’s existential position; for example in my case, being a new immigrant as well as an academic conducting research on this topic. The notion of Chineseness is ambiguous and problematic (Ang, 2001; Tu, 1991; Chow 1998; Chun 1996). I discussed some of the key events that construct the notion of Chineseness in the context of nation and nation building, nationalism, and the modernization of China in a previous chapter (Chapter 2). As discussed before, what is at stake is to tackle the challenge of translating the academic term of “Chineseness (zhongguoxing 中国性) into a communicative term of being a Chinese.

To certain extent, I have shared with my informants the lexical content of the word. It indexes a system of semiotics for a deep understanding of the nuances of language in a communicative context. At a pragmatic level, I had to pay extra attention to those terms of Chineseness that are able to bring extra social and cultural relevance to my informants. Literature of Chinese history reveals how the notion of Chinese is never homogeneous or pure under such a term as “Chinese” (Schurmann and Schell 1967; Roberts 2006; Brown 1996). With incessant interactions, sometimes violent ones, between China and its geographical neighbors, and with the waxing and waning of the ruling authorities throughout Chinese history, there is no clear distinction between what is traditional China or pure Chinese culture, and what is not,

that can be exclusively separate from the exogenous Western or other. It becomes further complicated since the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, the last ruling dynasty of China during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, was followed by the formation of Modern China as a nation (Elvin 1991; Wang 1991). The May Fourth Movement in 1919 is generally accepted as the starting point of the Chinese modernization movement. It started with a series of student demonstrations, strikes and events against the Chinese government's policy towards the unequal treaties including the Treaty of Versailles (signed on June 28, 1919), and later amounted to a wider social and intellectual revolution. It is marked as the beginning of the vast modernization of China, imbued with thoughts of the transformation of traditional Chinese civilization by importing western scientific knowledge, and ideas of individual human rights, national independency, and democracy (Chou, 1960). During this period, Chinese intellectuals attempted to establish a regime of total nationalism in contemporary Chinese history, which was based on the notion of Chinese nationalities (zhonghua minzu 中华民族) for the first time¹¹. A Nationalist's narration of all descendants of legendary Emperors Yan and Huang of antiquity, with black hair and yellow skin as part of the visible physiological characteristics, precipitates the (mis)perception of an uninterrupted racial and cultural "essence" of every Chinese along public history. The modern concept of "Chinese" took shape with its meanings embedded in its political and historical contexts at the time the concept of Chinese were used to glue together "a dish of sands" (a quote from Sun Zhongshan also known as Sun Yat-sen) when encountering the colonial and imperial invasion in the early twentieth century.

¹¹ This was dated back to 1912, the establishment of the Republic of China after the fall of Manchus (Qing Dynasty). It was declared a "Republic of Five Nationalities" (wuzu gonghe, 五族共和), referring to Mongol, Manchus, Tibetans, Muslim, and Han peoples. See more thorough discussion on Chinese as a nation from historical point of views in Wang (2001) and Duara (2009:1-50, 115-204).

Chinese as a language is never a singular noun if one delves further into its history (the same is true of history in general) (DeFrancis 1950&1984). Chinese languages, specifically in their spoken forms comprise a bundle of different dialects: for example, Cantonese, Fukienese, Wu, Mandarin, not to mention the other minority languages besides those related to the Han ethnicity. The written form of Chinese is particularly significant, generally known as the only living pictographic system¹² in the world. No matter how the narrative of the archeological discovery of the script on turtle shells known as “Oracle Bone Inscription 甲骨文” is linear and overarching, it might still act as a glue that symbolically reconnects or reinvents the over-complicated racial and ethnic fragments trespassing the long river of history. Nevertheless, however significant the role of the written form of Chinese is claimed to be, that role is significantly undermined, as far as the practice of writing is concerned, in the context of heritage language learning.

The ideological views of language in relation to the development of modern nation-states see language as a defining characteristic, or essence, of a nation. The May Fourth Movement awakened a “need” to modernize China through the modernization of the Chinese language. The nationalist movement was driven by a broader intellectual and political project in which Chinese national elites initiated, promoted, and legitimated reforms of the Chinese language (Chen 2007). DeFrancis recorded stories of the contingencies of establishing a phonetic system of the Chinese script, a new standard spoken language and a system of writing, in the practices of unifying the Chinese language before the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 (1950, 31-84). After 1949, the People’s Republic of China initiated a

¹²As a matter of fact, Chinese is not pictographic in the way that Mayan or Babylonian was. It is more accurately described as picto-phonetic, or the ideographs (DeFrancis 1984). Xu Shen compiled in the Han Dynasty (220BCE-220AD), *shuowen jiezi* described pictographic characters as only one of the six different character types or principles (liushu).

language reform creating what is known as the “Common Language (putonghua 普通话)” in the 1950s. This reform promoted a simplified Chinese (deriving from other practices of language reform), language schemes and policy strategies aimed at eliminating illiteracy for all Chinese people and unifying the people of “new China” (xin zhongguo 新中国). The collective work of the Chinese intellectuals, together with political forces, institutions and policies, ultimately led to the selection of a particular language as the nation’s language, which was intended to heighten a national consciousness and “national identity”, or the ideology of Chinese people as a pure and uncontaminated racial group. However, underlying the rationale as well as the practices of the “Common Language Movement” was the fact that the “simplified process” of Chinese language has been “deconstructed”, not by traditional methodologies but by Indo-European language (DeFrancis 1950, 31-84; 1984). The Chinese language has its own trajectories of borrowing, importing, and integrating new linguistic structures by way of its continuous encounters and contact with the western world, such as through loanwords from Japan in the translation of missionary work and in the trans-lingual practices of translation (Liu 1995). It is both a myth and a history of invention that the Chinese language had been a pure and uncontaminated language, to say nothing of a pure and uncontaminated racial group.

Unlike the ideology of “One nation, one language”, a speech community plays a significant role in connecting people. For Chinese people in diaspora spread out at a global level, language opens a newly-imagined space intertwined with various imagined political (Anderson 1983) entities to feel connected with their own specific interests and values (Zhu 2005; Wang 1991). There is a new meaning associated with being Chinese, largely attributed to and intertwined with the metaphor of awakening a sleeping dragon, namely, the resurgence of China’s political and economic power on

the global stage (Jacques 2009; Kristof & WuDunn 1995). The prosperity of China may inject an increased confidence in the political and cultural identity of the Chinese people. New layers of meaning have been added to the symbolic categorization of Chinese among the Chinese people living within the geopolitical nation state, as well as the diasporic Chinese people around the world.

The challenge for the sociological and anthropological quest is to describe and make sense of the social reality and social experiences involved in being Chinese, as well as the Chinese language(s), beyond simple linguistic markers. Subjects' experiences of being, or becoming, more or less Chinese through using the Chinese language prompts us to consider the noun form of "Chinese" in the sense of a verb, that is the experience and practices of using one or more of the Chinese languages. It is the micro-conditions at the heritage language school that link the use of the Chinese language among Chinese living out of China to an idea of becoming more or less Chinese. The practices at the Chinese school shape the experience of being Chinese. As detailed in Chapters Four and Five, I experienced and observed the sense of Chineseness being produced through teaching Chinese as a heritage language in the field, including claims, descriptions, interpretations, symbols, interaction, relationships, events, gestures, and space at the fieldwork site in which I chose to conduct the research within the ethos of multi-cultural Canada. These aspects of Chineseness collectively make up the written product of my research. The use of Chinese language refreshes both my own fieldwork experience and that of my informants. Three basic forms of meanings are:

1. China中国, the nation, a geopolitical place, as a noun
2. Chinese中国的, relating to its people, fifty-five minority ethnicities besides the Han ethnicity, as an adjective or,
3. Chinese language, spoken and written, Mandarin as a lingua franca

At one level, by weaving “Chineseness” into my own research context, there are other thematic terms and concepts scattered in academic literature:

- A. Chinese culture 中国的文化
- B. Chineseness as essence in culture 中国文化的精髓
- C. Imaginary Chineseness 想像中的中国
- D. The performativity of Chineseness, a seemingly naturalness of being a Chinese, particularly in the forms of everyday life, for example food, fashion, artifacts and ethnic space

This academic-oriented communicative framework entails several meanings I was able to expand and communicate with key informants. These include sets of criteria possibly held by individual Chinese to differentiate the Chinese culture(s) from those not, and/or a nationhood imagined by my informants in a diasporic community. This is hinged in such a position as to put an individual in the centre of the Chinese culture. Therefore, the concept is further translated and interpreted by listeners and speakers with reference to its relatedness to personal experience at certain points in time and space, and the attendant emotions/sentiments/relationship with an imagined China. At the personal level, the notion of Chineseness is articulated in a metaphorical measure of emotional distance, by:

- i. Complex emotional ties (qinjie 情结) with (imagined) China;
- ii. sense of belonging to (imagined) China (guishu gan 归属感)

A third cluster also comes from everyday discourse and experience of being a Chinese. Metaphorical ways to articulate Chineseness therefore emerge:

- a. Root (Chinese Gen 中国根)
- b. Chinese flavor, rich and light flavor (Zhongguo Wei(er) nong 中国味儿浓, Zhongguo Wei(er) Dan 中国味儿淡). Original flavor of Chinese people (Yuanzhi Yuanwei de zhongguoren 原汁原味的中国人) is embedded with the meaning of authenticity and being a Chinese

The Root metaphor mirrors Tu’s powerful discourse of Cultural China using the metaphor of a tree (Tu, 1991), which serves to map out the Chinese in diaspora while

also focusing on the origin, connectedness and continuity in culture. The metaphor of a tree has been harshly criticized by Deleuze and Guattari who propose another metaphor, that of “rhizome”, or a structure in potatoes (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:3-28). As the former is defined by structures of dominance, for example the idea of the “mother tongue,” the use of rhizome attempts to shift one dominant point into many subsidiary points, which are connected to each other without a centre or root. Nevertheless, the root metaphor is an apt vehicle for engaging discussion, and even prompts some closer examination of the concept.

From another angle, the “taste/flavor” metaphor was added to the repository of Chineseness from my knowledge as a cultural “insider”. It might explain why a customary greeting between Chinese people seeing each other on any given day is not “How are you?” but rather “Have you eaten yet?” This phrasing can be seen as a remote connection to the spread of Chinese restaurants and Chinese food in overseas Chinatowns. It also resonates with a popular discourse I came across during the Chinese New Year (Lunar Year) festival. People use “taste or flavor” to describe whether the traditions of the Chinese New Year are practiced the same way as they used to be or not.

The above discussion attempts to flesh out the position of the so-called local ethnographer who is part of the speech community and fluent in speaking the language. I still stumble through the task of translating the concept of Chineseness. The task of translation becomes a metaphor by itself, not only in a linguistic sense, but also as a multi-layered task, basically translating everything from language, to identity and culture. I kept asking myself questions such as: to what extent do I share the same notion of Chineseness with my informants? Which words or terms shall I choose to

signify Chineseness appropriately in communication? What kind of collaboration should occur between my informants and me in terms of constructing the meaning of Chineseness? This is also the central issue that Briggs discusses. The re-contextualization of Chineseness charts an intellectual journey from theoretical conceptualization to various communicative frames, from seminar room to the fieldwork (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: (Un)Translatability of the Notion of Chineseness

Chineseness		
<i>Lexical translation</i>		<i>Referential framework</i>
· China	→ 中国 (zhongguo)	→ China, the nation-state, a geopolitical place, as a noun
· Chinese people	→ 中国人 (zhongguo ren)	→ Chinese people, including 55 minority ethnicities besides Han ethnicity, as an adjective or, → Chinese way
· Chinese, relating to its language, speaking and writing	→ 普通话 (putonghua) → 方言 (fangyan) → 中文 (zhongwen) → 国语 (guoyu) → 中文字 (zhongwenzi), 中国字 (zhongguozizi), 方块字 (fangkuaizi)	→ Mandarin, historically, “Officials” speech (官话) → Various dialect, for example Cantonese, Fukienese, Hakka (Kejia) → Chinese speech, in a Chinese as second language context? → National language, in Taiwan → Written system, simplified character vs. complicated character

<i>Semantic translation, research context</i>		<i>Referential framework</i>
· Chinese culture	→ 中国文化	→ Ways of thoughts and conduct
· Imaginary China	→ 想像中的中国	→ Anderson (1983)
· Essence of Chinese culture	→ 中国文化的精髓	→ With a reference to authenticity
· Chinese elements (for example in food, fashion artifacts)	→ 中国元素	→ Popular culture, popular discourse

<i>Social relation/ emotions, semantic and communicative context</i>		<i>Referential framework</i>
· (Emotional) Complex, Emotional tie(s)	→ 情结	→ Psychological effect, attachment i.e. a place
· Sense of belonging	→ 归属感	→ Psychological effect, identity

<i>Metaphorical translation, communicative context</i>		<i>Referential framework</i>
· Root in China/Chinese cultural) root	→ 中国根	→ Connectedness among Chinese in diaspora
· (Chinese) taste or flavor	→ 中国味道	→ Metaphorical expression, performativity of Chineseness

By starting my conversation with “Some people think, say or comment ...” and ending with “what do you think?” I consciously employed projective techniques to engage informants and gauge their responses to my questions, to explore the domain of “authenticity”, “root”, “complex” and “taste” in a related context. Meanwhile, these questions reflected the intended frame of reference. I also used a literal translation of Chineseness, as a last resort, by using English directly, or by adding one more linguistic references to assist the informants in their understanding of my research.

Translatable or untranslatable?

As discussed above, the spectrum of meanings of Chineseness can be explored via

such terms as root and flavor/taste. Generally speaking, both “roots” and “flavor/taste” turned out to be easily understood during the interviews. As metaphors, both expressions stimulate the cognitive structures of the mind (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999) and made my intention more easily understood. It seemed to open a subtle channel between my informants and me with more possibilities for reference to the meaning of Chineseness. Not all informants passively accepted my choice of metaphors to express the meaning. One informant rejected the fixation on the notion of root (zhongguo gen 中国根), and tried to explain it by using a diagram of a pie with different ingredients in proportions: Chinese, Canadian, Chinese-Canadian, him or her self. Their reactions reveal a co-construction of the notion of Chineseness. Chinese “taste/flavor” stimulates the visual and aural associations beyond the abstract term, for example, in certain social situations, as sensory cues might contribute to the referential framework of meanings and virtual accessibility between interlocutors in communicative events (Bandler and Grinder 1979). This metaphorical translation endeavours to make explicit the implicit through sensory cues, tapping into the boundary between the visible and the invisible. It also reminds me of the term “visible minority” that applies to all the ethnic groups in Canada. What is visible and what is invisible? Why are some visible and others not?

I chart the layers of translation in the following table (Table 3.2), which will later lead to a more discussion with regard to the everyday performativity of constructing Chinese cultural identity in Chapter Five. In the following table, I use three smiley icons - 😊, 😐, and ☹️ - as an indication of what worked and what did not work smoothly during my interactions with informants. To say it “worked smoothly” I mean that during the verbal interaction, the informants showed a readiness to tell their personal stories, memories and experiences. Some of their personal stories were quite

amusing. For example, one informant recalled how he ended further contact with another parent because that parent “shamelessly talking about why the bother of studying Chinese, but better spending the same amount of time in learning. English” He raised his voice and told me how he still felt offended about his attitudes of “dumping Chinese”. Another informant confessed herself as a “bad cop” in teaching children Chinese, she said, “it is the Chinese way in learning, taking much efforts in practicing (writing) and remembering them (the Chinese characters)”. The icons of ☹ and 😞 mimic informants’ expressions of feeling overwhelmed, lost or confused when talking about some “terms”. While using the term of “Chinese culture”, informants tended to use a formal style of speaking, and were stuck by the idea of how “deep and profound (bo da jing shen 博大精深)” Chinese culture is, for the sake of responding to my questions. In the same table, I also explain the rationales behind each reactive indication:

Inter-subjectivity in ethnographic quest

A problematic issue occurred for me, both theoretically and methodologically, was to what extent my experiential account would transform the research as well as ethnographic writing, seeing as I was identified as both a researcher and a Mandarin-speaking immigrant from China. To frame the same issue in a different way, I kept asking myself to what extent the ethnographic researcher intervenes in the research. The issue manifests itself in a multi-layered understanding and communication of “Chineseness”. I use the term “translation” as the concept to describe my “intervention” beyond its literal meaning. It points to two questions: what is translated, and who made the translation. I prepared a list of my own translations of the notion of Chineseness before entering the field, and relied on my experiences in the field to come up with more discourse on Chineseness during the fieldwork. The

intention was to make meaning out of Chineseness through the interaction between the researcher and his or her informants. I am fully aware I take a privileged role in communicating with my informants in Mandarin in the field, while I might be in a culturally challenged position to communicate and completely translate my research for my academic audiences. One of the solutions to the challenge is that I continually asked myself to what degree I had changed the rhythm of the interaction and interviews. In other words, my informants were “forced,” or at least persuaded, to think about the question of Chineseness.

Table 3.2: Level of Accessibility with Different Frames of Reference on Chineseness

Chineseness			
<i>Lexical layer</i>		<i>Communicative layer</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China, the nation, geopolitical place, as a noun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 中国 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☹ 中国 ☹ 中国的 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Literal and too generic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese, relating to its people, 55 minority ethnicities besides Han ethnicity, as an adjective or, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 中国的 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☹ 中国的 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Literal and too generic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese, relating to its language, same as meanings of Greek, French 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Mandarin 官话 → Common language 普通话 → Dialect 方言, for example Cantonese → 国语 in Taiwan → Spoken vs. written; simplified character vs. complicated character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☹ Mandarin 官话 ☹ Common language 普通话 ☹ Dialect 方言, for example Cantonese ☹ 国语 in Taiwan ☹ Spoken vs. written; simplified character vs. complicated character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Specific in linguistic contexts → Mostly refer to Mandarin and simplified Chinese taught at school

<i>Semantical layer, research context</i>			
· Chinese culture, ways of thoughts and conduct	→ 中国文化	☹ 中国文化	→ General and abstract concept → Overwhelming
· Imagined community	→ 想象中的中国	☹ 想象中的中国	→ Need probing for memories, in historical contexts
· Essence of Chinese culture	→ 中国文化的精髓	☹ 中国文化的精髓	→ Ambiguous, connotation of good or bad in an evolutionary thinking along the process of Chinese modernization

<i>Social relation/ emotions level, semantic and communicative context</i>			
· (Emotional) complex; emotional tie(s)	→ 情结	☺ 情结	→ Relevant to individual, personal → Triggers emotions → Encourages narrations

<i>Metaphorical level, semantic context</i>			
· Root	→ 中国根	☺ 中国根	→ Easy to understand → Triggers emotion on root → Arouses attitudes, → Encourages narrations
· Taste or flavor, thick/rich vs. light/subtle	→ 中国味道	☺ 中国味道	→ Easy to understand → Triggers sensory cues → Encourages narrations on experiences

I also speculated on the “language or cultural competence” I have as an ethnographer speaking the native language - Mandarin. Besides acknowledging my dual role as both a researcher and a community member, the inherited communicative situation and event in the fieldwork, I also come to realize my possession of a native evaluation of the words and terms I chose would serve in the first place as a frame or

lens to construct meanings in such a social activity. This explains my choice of “taste/flavor” over “roots” in order to solicit more stories and personal interpretations on Chineseness. At the same time, the words and terms my informants chose were noted. Nuances exist in communicating the meaning that is reflected by responses. When one informant told me the perceptible “original Chinese culture” resides in Taiwan, it became easy for me to relate his response to that of another informant, who is concerned with the feelings of nostalgia by Taiwan people. The way they engaged in our conversation by relating to their experiences with Taiwan or Hong Kong people, those who are in diaspora, reflected their “grappling” with the issue of ideology, authenticity and cultural belonging. Therefore, the interpretation of ethnographic data responds to, consciously and unconsciously, the social and cultural presence of micro-discourses of Chineseness. The constant changing of referential meanings of Chineseness might be compared to Heraclitus' maxim that “You can't step twice into the same river”. Each time I used the notion of Chineseness, it was like stepping into a riverbed of Chineseness with various references to the overall concept. In other words, meaning-making leads to appropriation in the practice of social interaction, as Clifford writes:

“Comparative concepts – translation terms – are approximations, privileging certain “originals” and made for specific audiences.”
(1997:11)

The question of word choice on the notion of Chineseness concerns me most since it presupposes and attunes the social context of communication between the researcher-informants if we understand the ethnographic interview as a “communicative event” (Briggs, 1986). Nevertheless, what are the limitations in ethnographic reality in the form of interview? How shall the anthropologist unpack the (inter)subjectivity?

Metaphorical translation has turned out to be an effective way to (re)present and communicate the idea of Chineseness during the fieldwork. It encourages narrations of personal experiences. Feeling lost in translating Chineseness is no better than translating it into methodological or operational questions. Problems in translation lead to alternatives of understanding the multilayered and situational meanings. What needs to be paid attention to is how to find what is absent or hidden in the meaning. The daunting task for anthropologists is how to unpack the sensory references. What kind of impact do these sensory references have on cultural beliefs and practices? The challenge can be answered partly by a thick description of the contextually specific, experiential ethnographic account.

Chapter 4: A Chinese Language School under the Program of International Languages

"Diasporas are the exemplary communities of the transnational moment."

-- Khachig Tölölian *Diaspora* (1991, 5)

International Languages Program, and/or Heritage Language Program

All Saturday Chinese Language Schools are officially operated under Ontario's "International Languages Program (ILP)". "International Languages Program" has historically grown out of a program called "Heritage Languages Program", those being, at the same time, educational and community enrichment programs. In this chapter, I attempt to investigate to what point and to what degree the name change has started to take on, or represent, new dimensions of the Chinese school at one locality. How does this International Languages Program/School become embedded within a concept of Chineseness in the context of the Chinese diasporic community?

The Ontario Education Act (1990) enables a school board¹³ to provide International Language Programs (ILP) under its Continuing Education Department. The precursor to the ILP was called the "Heritage Language Program (HLP)". The term "Heritage Language" seems to have originated in Canada in the 1970s and formerly went by other names such as "Third language". Other comparable programs in the United Kingdom and Australia use terminology such as "community, ancestral, ethnic, immigrant, minority, original, non-official, or second/third language programs" (Hornberger and Wang, 2008; Duff 2008). Technically, "International Languages" today include almost the same languages previously counted as "Heritage Languages"

¹³According to data from the Ontario School Information System, there are a total of seventy-two school boards, including thirty-one English Public Boards, twenty-nine English Catholic Boards, four French Public Boards, and eight French Catholic Boards.

or “Third Languages,” referring to languages other than the two official languages of English and French, or the aboriginal languages (Duff 2008). In most current scholarship, the meaning or understanding of “Heritage Language(s)” denotes cultural re-production that serves the purpose of cultural survival. It references all speakers coming from the same “heritage” or root. “International Languages” refers to different language speakers but also implies that “we are the same” aside from speaking different languages. One can argue that the change of program name reflects the rhetoric of identity politics, a tactic politicians takes to respond to the changing of demographics of voters in election. It also reflects a linguistic-economic investment in constructing Canadian identity (Cummin 1990; Duff 2008). At least on its surface, the program has taken on a global and transnational outlook in the pedagogy of citizenry and enculturation. ILP is interpreted on the website of one local school board in the following way:

How do you prepare to be a global citizen? Give your child the opportunity to learn a new language or to maintain the language of their heritage. In partnership with community groups, we offer classes in 43 different languages at the elementary level and 22 languages at the secondary level. Choose a language of your choice or contact us if you want to start a new language. This program is funded by the Ministry of Education and therefore there is no cost to parents.

(Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, 2010)

Another school board starts its introduction to ILP with the following:

Research shows that learning a second or third language has a positive effect on all aspects of a child’s educational development.

(Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School Board, 2010)

Matt, the Program Coordinator of a French Catholic school board is one of the two informants I contacted from the institutional side. During one visit, Matt showed me a stack of policy documents related to the program, which is made up of part of the Education Act and a copy of PPM7, known as “Policy/Program Memorandum No 7:

Heritage Language Program.” PPM7 outlines the statutory and regulatory references for the current ILP. The version of PPM7 that Matt showed me was dated June 29, 1990, following the Revised Regulations of Ontario 285/90 of the Education Act. In the heading of the document, there is a reference note on the PPM7 1990 to a revision to PPM7 in 1982. On the website of the Ontario Ministry of Education, it is strange to find that PPM7, which was revoked at the time (on September 9, 2009), is still referred to as the “Heritage Languages Program” and did not match the version Matt showed me (the one following 285/90) with all the terms changed to “International Languages”.

I approached the Education Officer from the Ontario Ministry of Education afterwards in order to get a more complete and authoritative list of the documents related to the program. The officer replied over the phone and via emails that the only version at his post follows Ontario Regulation 154/89, an earlier version than what Matt showed me, but printed with the same Date of Issue. In other words, for whatever reason, it was revealed to me there are two versions of PPM7 dated on the same date of June 29, 1990, one where all reference to “Heritage Language” was replaced with “International Languages”, and the other without. The two versions of these same documents with different referents reflect a policy of different names at different institutional levels. It is somewhat arbitrary for practices at the local level.

In Canada, the Department of Canadian Heritage has a governance structure administering Canada's two official languages – English and French. Under the Official Language Secretariat (officially started on April 1, 2006), Canadian Heritage mandates Canada’s linguistic duality. Funding of ILP (formally known as HLP) has been provincially provided through the Ministry of Education, which partially reflects the institutional structure in order to produce a multicultural identity within a citizenry

beyond simply the community and cultural spheres. In reality, learning languages other than English and French is marginalized (Canadian Heritage 2011), as the utility of those languages outside of the classroom, and/or cultural spaces is largely negligible.

The funding of ILP has been strictly based on the number of students enrolled. In another words, the school needs numbers for its weekly operation to continue. With eligible instructors, an ILP course requires a minimum of twenty-five students enrolled in the course. It is the school's job to recruit enough students in order to cover the hourly salary of the instructor. It would not be a difficult task to find students in big cities such as Vancouver, Montreal or Toronto, but the chances would be lower or rare in small communities. "Needs" are highly aggregated and dependent on the spread of the immigrant population. The situation was confirmed when I asked the provincial Ministry of Education for the number of students enrolled in the program. The answer to this question was "there is no data available at the Ministry level," since "the program is sporadic".

Strictly speaking, by the time I finished my fieldwork, the language program was in a vacuum policy-wise, since the PPM7 was officially revoked on September 9, 2009 (the date available on the website of Ministry of Education) and the program was under review. When I asked about the next move and the approximate time for the new PPM to come into effect, neither the program coordinator nor the education officer could give me an answer other than "We don't know".

Nuances of the use of terminologies in communication

According to the documents Matt showed me, the regulation gives the permission to a school board to employ a person who is not a certified teacher in order to provide instruction in an international language course or class, if "the person holds

qualifications acceptable to the board for such employment”. This criterion leaves some flexibility in terms of the recruitment of teachers at the level of school boards and the school. The differences between the terminologies used at the local level and the institutional policy and regulatory level draw my attention to further questions and analysis (Table 4.1). The nuances of these terms reflect a fissure in the concept of “International languages” at both an institutional and community/local level. This also points to the ambiguous positions of both the school and its teachers.

Table 4.1: Juxtaposition of the Terminologies

<u>Local terminologies</u>	<u>Terminologies at institutional policy and regulatory level</u>
Chinese Language School (zhong wen xuexiao 中文学校)	International Languages Program (used to be known as the Heritage Languages Program) 国际语言项目 (遗产语言项目)
School (xuexiao 学校)	Site (项目) 点 / 场地
The Principal (xiaozhang 校长)	Instructor-in-chief 讲师主管
Teacher(s) (laoshi 老师)	Language Instructor 语言教师

My reading of the juxtaposition of the terms, together with Matt’s differentiation between the two, serve to shed light on my understanding of the position of the school teachers at the local or community level. “Principal” (xiaozhang 校长) and “teachers” (laoshi 老师) are all I heard during my weekly interaction with people from the school. “Instructor-in-Charge/Chief” and “Instructors” were basically absent from situational field contexts. This reflects a hierarchy of teaching positions especially from the institutional side. It also reflects the importation of “native” institutional norms into a foreign context. The importation of teaching strategies and styles also opens room for teachers to construct and negotiate their Chinese identities (see more discussion in

Chapter 5). Sitting and chatting with Matt in the cafeteria area at school board, I observed that the terminologies Matt used in our conversation fluctuated between the two sets of the terminologies described above. On the one hand, Matt's responses were keyed to the type of language I used in my questions. On the other hand, he was inclined to use "local terminologies" in describing his experiences of school visits. Matt had at least two narratives at hand, one skewed to the "Heritage/Community" and the other skewed to the "International" not only because of his role in the program, but also because of the fact that each school under his supervision varies. Each narrative reflects a different "character of conceptions and uses of language" (Kroskrity 2004): one serves to mark the ethnic and community identities, and the other serves as a practical tool to facilitate, for example, business communication. Matt rendered program stories with more reference to International Languages and little mention of the Chinese component while talking about one newly opened Chinese language school outside of Ottawa (under the administration of the school board though). He was excited in conveying how local businesses would benefit from that school, as well as locals in understanding another way of life and traditions. As I moved on to ask about participation and contribution from the Chinese community, he switched back to the use of terms like "schools" instead of "programs". While talking about "Hai Pi", he added more "community" orientation to his presentation. Matt told me he "believes in the least possible power of the school board over the school" as "a basic grade program". He assured me that the program under his school board is the only program that "still carries the spirit of the community-based program".

Our conversation on the same topic switched back and forth between terms of "schools" and "sites", "teachers" and "instructors". In both narrations, Matt describes the ILP program operation in the sense of a performance:

“(The communities) are on stage, we are behind the curtain.”

(Matt, Informant Interview)

He elaborated further by using the metaphor of stage performance, describing a division of labour between the “on stage” and the “behind the curtain”, comparing the community to “the face” of the program, needed “to present a successful program”:

“I described ‘the communities on stage, the administration behind the curtain’ from my experience in being both on stage and directing plays since I was young. Having experienced both aspects of theatre production made me realize how much work goes on behind the scenes and how much cooperation is needed between the actors on stage and the production people behind it, in order to have a truly successful production. The actors on stage (the schools) are the ones that the community sees. They are the ones that the community communicates with. They are the face of the International Languages Program. We, behind the stage, have to ensure that they receive all the support they need in order to present a successful program.”

(Matt, Informant Interview)

Although this view might present the position and vision of the school board, it reveals a performative side to the program in terms of both the community and the school board. The use of metaphor points to the fact that the International Languages Programs has to represent itself within the language ideology of multiculturalism. It also plays a role in the construction of a hegemonic community – by using collective “will and agency” in Gramsci’s sense (Smith 2004).

The program is normalized into the educational system by administrative regulations and procedures; take for example “roles and responsibilities” at the school board. Communication is administratively expected between the day school principal and the instructor-in-charge of the International Language Schools, as described in “Roles and Responsibilities” of the school board’s memorandum. “Regular interaction and communication” within “a shared space” is emphasized. As the document outlined:

“Regular interaction and communication between the day school principal and the instructor-in-charge of the International Languages Schools is the key to a successful collaboration within the context of shared facilities.”

(Program operation document)

When I asked if there was any direct communication between day school and Saturday school, Ms. Ping, the principal of the school, answered “very rare”. On one side, the flow of communication is fairly linear and the program coordinator serves to be the primary person for communication. On the other hand, on location, practices take place organically in the community.

Local space

Before turning to the practices at the local level, let me present a description of the school as a space in institutional discourse. For the Chinese language program as institutionalized in the school system, the essential task concerns sharing space, as specified in the same document Matt showed me:

“...Where a space is shared with a class in the regular day school program, storage and display space of the language class may be limited. Classroom teachers and instructors need to work together in order to accommodate this need.

Language classes should be provided with their own display space on a permanent basis. ... The host school will therefore make available to all groups:

- the required number of classrooms, including kindergarten rooms
- with each classroom, a space for the International Languages instructor’s teaching materials
- free chalkboard, a space allocation on the boards so as to denote the presence of the International Languages Program in the school
- office space
- a telephone
- nurse’s room
- gymnasium (if applicable)
- library area (if required)
- education technology (arrangements to be made with the day school principal)

The shared facilities and space define the boundaries of school practices. It

reflects the administration and management power the educational institution exerts in responding to the growing needs of ethnic communities in a multicultural society. The space is mediated and negotiated through its stakeholders, including the program coordinator, the teachers, parents and students. Furthermore, it is the beliefs, attitudes and practices of these stakeholders that construct and negotiate the contour of the culture at the school. I will start with a description of the local space at the Chinese language school that is both shared and not shared.

“Hai Pi” is located in an ordinary neighborhood, surrounded by rows of residential townhouse and houses in a typical North American suburban arrangement (Illustration 1). Off the road to the south, there is a French college. “Hai Pi” is housed in a French Catholic high school. The high school offers grade 7-12 schooling in its day school. The site does not reveal itself to be a Chinese school until Saturdays when many Chinese or Asian adults and children come streaming in through the entrance. Talking a walk in the corridors and classrooms, the space does not seem to be much of a literacy development environment suited to the age of most of the students of the Chinese school, with the majority in their kindergarten and primary school age. There is no such thing as a students’ wall of honour showing their schoolwork or artwork that one can often see in elementary schools. Along the main hallway, there are faded posters of students in laboratory suits. Those posters show options to study further after graduation. Looking into the classrooms, desks and chairs are all lined up in rows. The classrooms’ equipment varies. For example there is a world map and Periodic Table Chart in one classroom and a poster of a Mexican Sombrero in another classroom. This is obviously all handcrafted work done by the day school teachers themselves. The Chinese school seems to not be designed to leave any permanent trace of its activities. It is rather defined by its transient and temporary nature, located

in a kind of liminal space. In the end, it is the Chinese language school that borrows this educational space from others.



Illustration 2: An ordinary neighborhood

Passing through the school entrance to the left and down a few steps, there are a few small rooms with blue doors. The second blue door opens to Ms. Ping's office on Saturdays. Ms. Ping is the instructor-in-chief of "Hai Pi". Further down after the office of Ms. Ping is where the big office space of the day school is. Ms. Ping keeps her office in a rather informal way except when she needs to use a desk for doing paper work. The office area is somewhat like a "talking corner". Teachers and parents like to stop by to mingle. At the beginning of each new semester, a handwritten note is hung up on the door next to the room, detailing the designation of classes and classroom numbers for each teacher. Across from the office door on the floor, is where stacks of community newspapers in Chinese are dropped. Parents come by to pick up community newspapers and read while waiting outside the classroom (Illustration 2).



Illustration 3: The Talking Corner in front of Ms. Ping's office (Circles added loosely exemplify the areas where teachers and parents lean to chat)

In “Hai Pi”, Mandarin courses are composed of a total of twenty regular classes from kindergarten to Level Ten, plus one Special Class. Normal classes are primarily classified by the students’ age. The Special Class was opened for students and families whose first language is not Mandarin. The Special Class with “foreign faces” indeed is the international flavor of the program according to Matt’s description. The Special Class mixes different demographics together, and was composed of both adult students and children, children from cross-ethnic marriages, adults with Chinese partners, adults who speak Cantonese but want to learn Mandarin, and children from earlier immigrant families whose family language is not Mandarin but Cantonese. There were also non-Chinese students, who claimed themselves being introduced to the school and class by one of their Chinese colleagues.

After I sat at the back of a representative class for two weeks, Principal Ping asked me one day if I would like to be a supply teacher for the Special Class, because one of her teachers was leaving on short notice. Later I found it was because the

original teacher had become too busy in her daily job as an assistant at a medical clinic. I became the best candidate since Ms. Ping thought that, with my English language capability, I could teach such a class. Therefore, I was considered someone who had “equivalent teaching experience” as outlined in PPM7. Ms Ping gave me a very short briefing. She reiterated her vision of teaching Chinese to immigrant children, emphasizing the importance of “arousing students’ learning interests”. “All else I will leave to you, it will be a stage for you to perform on, so teach whatever you want”, is what she said looking into my eyes with a palpable level of trust. Her confidence in my ability to go ahead on my own might not have been based on any credentials or experience I might have had (I had told Ms Ping about my extensive experience in facilitating discussions in various group settings), but rather on an assumption that my innate language ability and cultural knowledge and understanding as a native Mandarin speaker might be enough. Not until I did my own teaching did I realize that even though I do possess a native literacy and cultural knowledge, the job demanded considerable preparation for me to present the concepts to my students, or, to adopt Matt’s metaphor of performance, audience. By taking on the role of teacher, I quickly became aware of the process of appropriation for myself, which I will discuss in further details in Chapter Five. The Special Class can be represented as a case of change in the community. Even in the normal class, due to varying learning abilities, students’ language skills differed to a great extent. One school board Education Officer I interviewed told me that the teachers of the International Languages Program would be better served by a “progressive pedagogy” to deal with all the issues and challenges faced in the classrooms. “Progressive pedagogy,” the Education Officer explained, is the approach commonly employed in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) to deal with a broad range of learners. I am sure the teachers I met in

the Chinese Language School tackled the problems to various degrees in their own practices. However, I wonder to what extent the school board could have paid for professional training among these teachers.

After classes begin, the school becomes quiet. Strolling down the main corridor, parents are scattered in all directions, either reading newspapers or chatting with each other. The cafeteria buzzes with community and parents' activities, such as playing cards or chess. On another side of the cafeteria some people from the community trade vegetables harvested from their backyards. There was a couple, both in their 60s who became temporary vendors selling dumplings and other prepared food. The grandchildren of this senior couple used to study Chinese in the school, but have now moved back to China with their parents, who received job offers from a renowned university to teach in China. The vendor's area was my students' favorite place during the class break. Practicing a few words about food or counting money with the vendors made for quite a discussion in my classroom. Another two held a desk of used books and videos providing rental services. Insurance or financial brokers from the community were often seen hosting free workshops such as RRSP or Children's Education Plan seminars in the cafeteria. At other times, community service or business people offered free lectures on, for example, family consulting. Community members with shared experience of immigration created small social events and groups in the cafeteria. They came to know each other at the Chinese Language School. From there they socialized with each other in activities revolving around children's activities. Parents stayed connected, for example, by hosting kids' parties, and exchanging information on services and programs in the city. The school is thus a social space created by community members as well as being an opportunity for the teaching and learning of Chinese. The family, rather than the individual, tends to be

the smallest unit of participation in the school. Another group of community members view the school as a functional place or service. Some parents find the teacher the best “babysitter” for the children. Others go to the school to use the gym for exercising. Even many, if not the most, of the teachers enroll their own children at the school. Thus, going to the Chinese language school has multiple functions, such as exposing Chinese language and culture to the children, finding a babysitter, a productive use of time for the family. However, the social functions implicitly flow from a sense of identification with the community, a performance and/or a symbolic representation of the Chinese nation, and/or Canadian nation as an imagined community. It is in these forms of social practices at the language school that certain aspects or versions of Chineseness are reinforced, or re-negotiated.

After the language class finished around 11:30am, the main hall was instantly transformed into an arena for dance classes. There was one for adults and one for younger children after the two-and-half-hour funded language classes. The air was then filled with Chinese folk or pop music. Parents joined the adult dance class while waiting for their children to finish the children’s interest classes. As family seems to be the unit for participating in the language school, interest classes are designed to cater to the needs of both adults and children. Interest classes received no funding from the school board. Besides book fees, this is the only fee charged at the school. The amount of money collected is used to cover the recruitment of interest class teachers. Either language class teachers or community members with special talents lead the classes. The instructor of the dance class also taught a Grade 7 language class. The teacher of the Chinese drum class was the grandmother of one student, and the mother of one of the Chinese teachers. The grandmother “volunteered” to teach in the school. The drum class was dropped the next year after the grandmother went

back to China. Themes for interest courses were not fixed, but depended upon whether Ms. Ping was able to find “talented” members in the community. The selection of classes operated in a way quite similar to how the city does its recreation and culture programs but administered under a different institution.

Because the classifications of immigrants in immigration policy reflects particular social class membership in China as well as speaks of the life chances of the immigrants, unlike earlier waves of Chinese in diaspora, today’s immigrants take on new dimensions in their life in diaspora. Meanwhile, the English or French language competency of visible minorities still creates barriers for socio-economic integration. All teachers except for one I interviewed were female, and most of them have a university education. In sociological terms, their education offers an avenue for individual immigrants to gain social and economic capital out of larger social networks by leveraging their knowledge. It is not the same as taking on a survival job because of the limitation of the teaching hours. As described earlier, only those who teach for two-and-half hours per week will receive a paycheck from the school boards. Those teachers there are motivated to take the role of teachers. Besides such utilitarian rationalization, they are also motivated by a “mission” to pass on the language and culture through the performance of their own version of Chineseness.

The school also established a Singing and Dancing Troupe with the same name. The members of the singing and dancing group perform at various community festivals and multicultural events, representing the Chinese community. A long list of performances includes the “Tulip Festivals”, “Lumière Festivals”, “Asia Heritage Month”, “International Week Celebration”, “PWGSC United Way Campaign”, and “Dragon Boat Festivals”. The dance group celebrated its ten- year anniversary in June 2009. Basically, the school is embedded within a larger Chinese community and

shares many resources with other community groups.

In terms of engaging the students and piquing their interest in the ways of the Chinese, the teachers employ different approaches. I will analyze the patterns of teaching tactics in the next chapter. The ultimate goal of teaching is to arouse the learning aptitude of children along with creating a Chinese cultural identification. One strategy focuses on the affective dimension of narration. Another is a distancing strategy that de-emphasizes certain Chinese social norms and cultural values. There is a third strategy that leverages the aesthetic representation of Chinese artistic forms, such as Chinese poems, into a cultural identity. Based on my own intersubjective experience working as a supply teacher, I espouse an integrated approach of cross-cultural comparison to understanding this phenomenon. These approaches are both teacher-specific and student-specific, especially where the students' age and experience are concerned. The notion of Chineseness is appropriated, performed, and represented depending on different communicative situations via the praxis of teaching.

Summary

My weekly participatory observations in the field gave me a vivid sense of the rich context in which the Chinese Language School is embedded. An awareness of being a researcher together with my interactive experience draws attention to the teachers' participation in the school, which becomes a starting point for analyzing individual members' participation in the diasporic community. The language school is a specific space of the diasporic community, a hybrid space, not only because it takes on different functions, but also because members in the speech community converges, creating and negotiating new meanings in the relations of membership in the speech community. The site becomes both a language school and a continuing learning

program; both a language school and a school community; both a learning community and community in diaspora, both a performance of imagined community and one node of a translocal social network. Practices in the Chinese language school are a significant node connecting everyday immigrants' lives outside of home and work. Teaching and learning Chinese is also not exclusively there for children, but also engages adult immigrants, especially the first generation of immigrants. The significance exists in the space's translocality (for example family, work place), which is characteristic of immigrants' lives in the host country. The Chinese in diaspora conduct regular "travel" to certain places and spaces situated between the familiar and strange within the settled city, between assimilation and differentiation, between the past and the present, and between the real world and re-imagination. New social groups and networks are formed. In such a context, certain versions of Chineseness are reinforced while others are deemphasized. New layers of personalized Chineseness are constructed and negotiated, through encounters in this new social network.

Most immigrants today have developed a life adapted to "mainstream" Canadian society. Nevertheless, language and cultural barriers still exist for them, limiting themselves in certain social networks. In the language school, the role of teaching is shifted to a group of presumptive "teachers", with less probing into who these teachers are. These nuances change the framework of learning and shift responsibilities so that they come under more detailed examination in Chapter 5. Community members, acting as teachers, come to the language school to create an appropriated space, at the same time, construct and negotiate their identities in diaspora. Individual member's interpretation of Chineseness represents a collective notion of Chineseness, as well as the diversity in the diasporic community. I will describe and discuss in more detail

how the teachers appropriate their own version of Chineseness in such a hybrid space.

Chapter 5: Articulating and Performing Chineseness in Teaching

“It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated.”

– homi k. bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994, 3)

Teaching Chinese in the community, a site of agency

The enculturation of immigrant children through language is highly relevant to immigrants, both in their everyday family life and community life in Canada. The practice of teaching Chinese in the community beyond the space of home seems to be largely centered around their personal trajectories – connecting who they were before coming to Canada with how they live after coming to Canada. All of my informants from “Hai Pi” were first generation immigrants who came to Canada in the last two decades. They came as immigrants under either the “family reunion” or “economic immigrant” categories. Most of my informants have university degrees and a background in teaching, but not necessarily in teaching Mandarin. Their teaching experiences before coming to Canada varied from university to kindergarten levels in a variety of subjects from geography to computer science. Ping, the “instructor-in-chief, also known as the “principal” in the community, is one among many who experienced China’s “Cultural Revolution” (1966-1976) as teenagers. She became one of the first group of university students after the Maoist mass movement in which youth in China were mobilized “Down to the Countryside” (xiangiang 下乡). After the “restoration of the university entrance exam” (恢复高考) in 1978, she studied English in university. She first came to Canada as an international student. During my conversations with her, she recalled her earlier student life in Canada. Sitting at her

stall, in a food court, she delved into her memories of isolation, fear, and adventurous experiences she had in her early student life in Canada. “The beginning was always hard, for example doing minimum paid labor work while studying in order to make the ends meet”, she told me, “one also has to be out-spoken about things here (in Canada). Otherwise people won’t take you seriously.” She reassured herself by re-telling her stories of hard work, independence and resilience of character. It is fairly common to hear sets of binary descriptions marking people from the east versus those from the west. However, the meanings of being independent or dependent, extroverted or introverted, adventurous or conservative can only be expressed and understood by placing them in their social situations. People also adjust themselves, or act out new roles, positions and social conditions regardless of the conflicts and/or ambivalence that may occur.

All her efforts paid off with a better life today. Ping’s study in the field of education finally led her to the position of “instructor-in-chief” at “Hai Pi” at the time when the school board was publicly recruiting for such a position. The weekly job of “instructor-in-chief” on its own obviously could not support her. What she lives on is a small food court business, part of a franchised food chain brand at one local shopping centre. She bought one first and later purchased another. Ping gave much of the credit to her daughter who helped out in the initial establishment of this family business. To rely on family members in leading a life is almost always a necessity for newcomers who lack various forms of social capital (Li 1988). Her daughter went to work in Hong Kong after helping purchase the franchised store as well as with the initial operation. Owning a food court store seems to me somewhat a departure from the strategy of owning a Chinese restaurant, most likely in a Chinatown enclave, common among earlier generations of Chinese immigrants. Ping invited me to her

store for more conversation and therefore I had the opportunity to get to know her more outside her role at the Chinese school. At one time, I met people at her store who approached her about promoting a community festival event. Being the principal of the Chinese school, Ping unsurprisingly gained more “social capital” within the Chinese community. She has moved towards a more centralized position in the community than other newer immigrants. Being the “instructor-in-chief” reflects both the residual and emerging lifestyle of a newer generation of immigrants in the present societal context.

In talking about the learning of the Chinese language, Ping, like many other parents, verbally rationalizes the learning in terms of its functional utility for, for example, future career development. “My daughter’s Chinese language skills enabled her to get a job in Hong Kong.” Ping made an additional note seemingly to emphasize the importance of learning Chinese. Ping also told me about her daughter finding another job after the one in Hong Kong. It was with “New Oriental”, a big name among people studying English in China, or aiming to study English to go abroad. New Oriental is a well-known English training organization in Mainland China. It is legendary for its success in delivering test preparation courses to help students in Mainland China to excel in their performance in such exams as TOFEL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) and GRE (Graduate Record Examination), pre-requisites for achieving the dream of “studying abroad”, specifically in the education systems in the United States and Canada. Students flock to study English, either driven by their own goal of studying abroad, or are directed into various programs by their parents. Immigrant parents, including many teachers in Hai Pi, know very well the advantageous position that people living abroad have for being in a “live” language environment – an access to

authentic language, by living in Canada. Though Chinese is not seen to be in an equivalent global position of importance to that of English at the moment, it is said to be the next global *lingua franca* in the years to come due to the growing political and economic power of China. Therefore it is quite understandable that immigrant parents embrace the practicality of studying Chinese. Henry (2008:15) points out the “technical fetish” within the context of studying English in China in general. He notes that competency, for Chinese people, is measured based on the successful completion of the accreditation test instead of actual spoken fluency (Illustration 3). It can be inferred that there is a general tendency among Chinese people to measure and evaluate the mastery of a second or third languages, perhaps partially due to the institutions such as TOEFL. It is the end that usually justifies the means. In the case of studying Chinese as both an International language and a heritage language, Chinese parents and teachers tend to feel “less oriented” towards technical competency since there is no right way or institutionalized standard, such as an accreditation process to measure in which direction the study and their efforts may be managed¹⁴. Evidence of good practices of teaching and learning are therefore contingent due to the lack of a systematic means to justify what might be defined as language and/or cultural competency in heritage language teaching. This might contribute to the marginalized positions the teachers are in achieving linguistic and pedagogical goals.

¹⁴Test of Chinese as a Second Language (TOCFL) that approximates the English TOEFL does exist. It is also known as hanyu shuiping kaoshi (abbreviated as HSK 汉语水平考试) exams. It was developed by Beijing Language and Culture University and became national standardized test. Hanban, the China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language oversees the HSK exams. However, TOCEL is certainly not as influential as TOEFL at present as China is not considered a top destination by students around the world.



Illustration 4: The billboard advertising of New Oriental promoting English learning classes in China

“Teachers” of the International Program often occupy a marginalized position in the labour market, mostly due to their lack of English language skills, credentials and local working experience. Most seek ways out of this marginality beyond temporarily taking labor jobs or going back to school. Therefore, some come to teach at Hai Pi as a switch from their daily life as housewives. Some started their Chinese teaching positions by tutoring their own children or children in the neighborhood, and then joined the school. Ai is one of the longest serving instructors in Hai Pi. She is a full-time stay-at-home mom who teaches on Saturdays. She started her teaching by tutoring two children from her neighborhood who were from Singapore. Her knowledge of language teaching comes from her educational background in Natural Language Logics, an interdisciplinary field of Mathematics, Linguistics and Philosophy. About fifteen years ago after coming to Canada with her husband, she went back to school to study Computer Science but later quit. With a reference letter from the parents of the students she tutored, she was later offered a job at a French

private school for a short time teaching Mandarin. It was a job that required two days of work during the week. In terms of Mandarin teaching experience at that French school, she admitted it was a great experience for her. She missed the school because it had better teaching facilities and resources. She was able to access more teaching materials for such things as students' craft projects. She taught students to make dragon boats and lanterns for the city's multicultural festival. It also gave her a sense of connection to the formal schooling system and mainstream society. Ai also admitted that there was more pressure in that environment, mainly due to her lack of English and French language abilities. She left the school when her second child was born.

Other teachers, for example Fen and Shao, are in the similar situation. Fen and her family came to Ottawa one year ago. She stayed at home to take care of her only daughter while her husband went back to school, hoping that a Canadian graduate education would bring more job opportunities. During the time I was in the school, Fen got pregnant with her second child, almost nine years after having her first child. In order to obtain a permanent residency status in Canada, Shao lives in Canada with her daughter while the husband works in the United States. Taking care of her daughter is a full time job, besides also teaching at the Chinese language school and some extra babysitting jobs at times. There are also a few grandparents teaching at the language school who have obtained their permanent residency status through family class immigration. Hai Pi largely relies on people with limited social capital in the new immigrant community to maintain its operation.

For teachers, teaching language and culture is something that has a connection to their lives in the past as well as in the present and to other social networks. Teaching is part of the adventure of living as new immigrants, and potentially offers an avenue

to move towards a more “mainstream” position (this can be both an imagination, and interpretation based on everyday personal encounters, as well as observation of those people who enjoy the North-American middle class status) in the wider community and society. This speaks to the fact that the Chinese immigrants are imagining a multicultural Canada as much as, if not more than, China. The Chinese community invests educators with higher status generally. The role of “principal” provides Ping with a higher, and more central, status in the Chinese community. This status has led her to have a better connection to other community networks and resources. The practice of teaching in the language school is a social and cultural activity within a community in diaspora that links the past, the present and the future for individual members. It reflects their temporal movement in terms of social status or positions in the social network, which is encapsulated in a context in the school.

At another level, community members who practice Chinese language teaching can be seen as advocates for learning both Chinese literacy and culture. The practice of teaching constitutes a primary mode of agency. A group of community members chooses to practice teaching despite demands on their time and effort incommensurable with the monetary compensation they receive. I have discovered that for these teachers the motivation is not so much about the language per se or its survival; rather it is because of the memories, emotions, and personal history attached to the language, which energizes these individuals in creating their own continuities between being Chinese in the past, the present and the future. Teaching is an investment in the future of the younger members of the community by creating a present context, connected to the future. Qing exemplifies the way in which the transference of language and cultural knowledge from generation to generation is a significant motivation for teaching at the Chinese language school.

“It doesn’t really take me that much time to do a lesson plan, to pick up a few articles is a piece of cake. Much of it comes from understanding accumulated in everyday life over the years.”

“不花什么时间备课，挑几篇文章很容易的。这些都是平时的积累，多年的理解。”

(Qing, Informant Interview)

Wen echoes this view. He is a parent with a strong desire to teach the language and culture to the children. Here is what Wen said in terms of the best materials for teaching:

“I collected and created my own inventory of one hundred Chinese poems. In my view, they are most suitable for young children. I did this for my sons first of all. My wife always said I should open my own language schoolmy knowledge (of Chinese language and culture) is all stocked in my brain, those memories of past experiences.”

“我搜集整理了100首适合特别孩子学习的古诗。我是为我儿子弄得这个。我老婆总说我应该开自己的中文学校。.....我了解的中国的东西都在我脑子里，过去的记忆，过去的经验。”

(Wen, Informant Interview)

Qing’s teaching of Chinese at the Chinese school is an extension of teaching in his family living room. From the very start, Qing presented himself, without airs, as an ordinary parent and not as a teacher. Qing moved to Canada after his doctoral studies in England and had a professional job in the private IT sector, a background quite different from that of many other teachers at “Hai Pi”. Principal Ping recruited him because of his reputation for parenting and mentoring an excellent student, his own son. His only son received the top graduating average score for Ontario upon graduation from high school a few years ago. He had taught at the school for almost two years and then quit, something not unusual given the fairly high turnover rate at the school. Quite a few teachers quit their jobs at language school after receiving a more formal or full-time job. After quitting, Qing still volunteered to organize a

Chinese writing competition (zuowen bisai 作文比赛) as part of a language and art show in the community. As the lead committee member in the competition, he expressed his core idea of children's learning Chinese to the participants at the wrap-up speech: "*learning Chinese is not about parents or teachers' wanting me to learn (yao wo xue 要我学)*", but a desire '*I want to learn (wo yao xue 我要学)*'".

Through the practice of teaching, linguistic capabilities, cultural knowledge and literacy skills become objectified and transformed into a cultural knowledge of Chineseness for individual articulation and performance, whether it is represented in the knowledge of ancient Chinese art forms, nostalgia for the past, the subtleties of family or human relationships, or etiquette in social interaction. A gap exists between the content of the teaching including what are in the textbooks and the prevailing social and cultural contexts in Canada. The Chinese language teachers play a role of leadership in promoting the performance and expression of personal cultural identity, although they see the limits and restraints of teaching Chinese in a non-Chinese-speaking larger environment. As the teaching and learning resources have no way to compete with what the children receive at their day school, the teaching at a Chinese language school reveals a performative temperament, at least on its surface. When looking closely into the teachings of individual teachers, one can see that the teaching is closely knitted into personal understandings of cultural identity.

The prospects for obtaining literacy at this type of language school are limited. It requires far more than two-and-a-half hours of institutional learning per week to achieve a solid mastery of the Chinese language. As I describe more in the next section, throughout the process, the teachers experience many contradictions and ambiguities in negotiating their relationship with the Chinese language and culture, if not in quite the same way as the children. The process of teaching is very much a

process of “becoming” Chinese in the Canadian context in the sense of Hall’s discussion of identity formation (1996). Teaching offers an opportunity for the teachers to present themselves to the community, as well as forming their own Chinese identity. As Hall remarked, individual subjects fulfill the role of making on-going history, by generating meaningful links between “how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves” (1996:4). Individual immigrants fulfill the role of teachers at least temporarily, and make meaningful connections among different points of cultural knowledge and cultural experiences. These teachers embody Chinese language and culture and at the same time articulate and perform them for others. The Chinese language schools represent a significant node in such networks. I argue that identity-in-formation is therefore practiced and constructed at various nodes among trans-local networks, transnational communities in diaspora and within the imagined community of nationhood. Furthermore, language teaching is an act of doing, doing things not only to the children, but also to oneself. The experiences and behaviors involved in language teaching make it possible to survey the use of language and interpret attitudes towards it, the meaning, and the conduct of speakers involving the language. My analytical stance advances the concept of personhood as contextually dependant by specifying the social contexts in which individuals practice (Harris 1989). It enables one to see teachers as agents in both the community and in a wider society, by their active attempts to “create a past, present, and future within which to situate their own and others’ conduct, to evaluate conduct retrospectively, and prospectively, to plan” (Harris 1989). Teaching Chinese language enables the performance of a multilayered version of Chineseness not only to the children being a “different” kind of Chinese person, but also to themselves of being, or representing, a Chinese person.

Negotiating and performing personalized versions of Chineseness

For certain community members, “going to a Saturday Language School” refers to the practice of teaching at Saturday school in addition to parents sending children to the school. The teaching, therefore, is a public practice, involving teachers instructing not only their own children in a family context but also the children of the diasporic community. These practitioners of Chinese teaching did not phrase their activity with the words, “I teach Chinese at a Chinese Language School,” but as “I go to a Saturday Language School”. Due to the transient nature of their teaching, the kind of teaching tasks are contiguous with doing lesson plans, lecturing, communicating, discussing and debating with other parents, teachers and community members, reading and reviewing homework, and reflecting on their own experiences of practice of teaching.

Teaching itself is also a performance in the classroom. The conduct in the classroom aggregates into a personalized version of Chineseness, especially when talking about teaching language as going beyond the teaching of language itself but also that of culture. Besides using personal knowledge and experience of the past and present as inventories for teaching, the act of teaching also involves various representational strategies concerning the interpretation of Chineseness syncretically, which I describe below.

Practicing teaching among first generation immigrants, like much everyday communication, involves an intensive effort at cross-cultural translation and interpretation. Translation is not just about the translation and interpretation between two or more languages, but between two or more cultures. In the praxis of Chinese language instruction, it also includes translating between different strata of being a Chinese. The “Zhongwen” series is the official textbook used in schools.

“Zhongwen” is a widely used set of textbooks in overseas Chinese language schools¹⁵ largely due to sponsorship from the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China. The textbook is free of charge for use in language schools. The teachers have many complaints about both its structure and content as being not suitable for students’ learning in Canada. Teachers’ complaints largely centre on the relevance of the content, which means, among the teachers, a perceived gap between what the students encounter in texts and in the world of Chinese around them. In addition, students’ Chinese literacy levels vary in each classroom, which aggravates the relevancy issue in students’ learning. Most teachers do not follow the “standard” textbook. “Hai Pi” had hosted two special meetings discussing the suitability of the textbooks among the teachers. Teachers, however, do have the freedom to make modifications to both the structure and content during the course of teaching as they wish. Skipping or trimming certain content/texts, which is seen as irrelevant to diasporic life in their own judgment, is common. It would be a valuable research to make a discourse analysis on various textbooks and the selection of learning materials. More interesting questions will include how the teachers attempt to maneuver and/or construct the content, how the students respond to, and negotiate, the content during their interaction with teachers in the classroom, and what the communicative patterns are as far as the teaching and learning materials are concerned. Due to the time limitation of this research, I only focus on teachers’ strategies of constructing a Chinese identity in the specific context of teaching at Chinese schools in Canada. Teachers have practiced their own lesson plans, developed personal teaching styles and discursive strategies in their own teaching to connect with the children, in which to construct a Chinese cultural identity with the children that might not be an explicit purpose of the teaching.

¹⁵ The series of “Zhongwen” is published by Jinan University, a project commissioned by Qiaoban, the Overseas Chinese Office of the State Council of People’s Republic of China. Often the Embassy of China sponsors the use of the textbooks in overseas Chinese language schools.

Nevertheless, teachers make efforts to engage the children at various levels by, for example, emphasizing the affective or emotional dimension in the texts in teaching; some with a focus on the whole, yet limited experiences at the school; and others' preference for a "distancing" or "de-sinicization" strategy in teaching. Notably, the teachers do not view these strategies as mutually exclusive. The different strategies adopted overlap under different circumstances. The ultimate purpose is to arouse or inspire active learning in the children, as well as to cultivate a connection with Chinese and Chinese culture. As Qing addressed the young participants in the writing competition, his goal in teaching is to inspire the children's learning attitudes - a shift away from learners' feeling that "*(parents or teachers) want me to learn (yao wo xue 要我学)*", toward that "*it's me that wants to learn (wo yao xue 我要学)*". His vision for teaching is to bring out the agency of the learner, which is also a point especially reiterated by Ms. Ping, and Li many times.

Qing claims his approach and choice of teaching style have an affective dimension in particular, emphasizing emotional relationships between Chinese people.

"I choose those articles which have an emphasis on emotions and affection (among humans) ."

"我挑的都是很讲感情的文章。"

(Qing, Informant Interview)

Qing used an essay titled "My Father's Back," written by Ziqing Zhu, a renowned poet and essayist in modern China (after the May Fourth Movement), as a great illustration, which concerns many of the subtleties in the Chinese father and son relationship. Qing consciously employs an "affective" approach to engage his students' sympathy with respect to Chinese language, culture and human relationships. Qing's teaching led him to write a blog representing Hai Pi for two years. He wrote essays and articles based on his own experiences teaching and tutoring. He also

collected articles he found inspiring with regard to overseas language teaching and learning on this blog. Practicing writing in Chinese, initiating discussions and sharing among the community led him to a construction of Chineseness. Qing has written a personal blog, featuring musings (xinde/心得 and/or ganwu/感悟) on various themes from his reading of Chinese history and culture (lishi wenhua 历史文化), contemporary cultural phenomena he observes in both China and Canada, and educating second-generation of Chinese-Canadian children (ziniu jiaoyu 子女教育). These writing topics come from both his everyday readings and interactions with either Chinese or non-Chinese people. Below is an excerpt I quote from Qing's blog with regard to educating second-generation immigrant children.

“Children's education is an art but not an engineering project, a creative process but not some kind of production. Therefore, there is no fixed model or rules in designing an education. Otherwise, the intelligence and potentialities in children will be easily stunted. The Chinese way of education is often like an “industrial assembly line”, which leads to the result that there are only standard products (measured by grades and scores) but no personality.”

“教育孩子是一门艺术不是一门工程，是创作不是生产。因此不能使用某种固定的模式或规则进行设计，否则，往往于不知不觉中扼杀孩子的灵性和潜能，中国的教育很大程度上就是一种“工业化流水线”，其产品只有质量(分数)而没有个性。”

Below is another excerpt from Qing's blog writing. Qing expresses his opinion on one of the most popularized cultural festivals related to Chinese one can witness overseas – the Dragon Boat Race. He holds a position that cultural festivals, and sport, can be one of the best avenues of performing one's culture or identity. He also stretches his reflection out of the personal experience in a larger issue of cultural contact and adaption.

“In oversea Chinese communities, one can often hear a saying of ‘we

should immerse ourselves in the mainstream society'. This one has confused me for quite a long time. What does it mean to "immerse ourselves in mainstream society?" Is it about being able to sit together with social elites, government officials or Members of Parliament at a dinner event? Or being able to invite them to the events held by the Chinese community? Or having a government job, or working as a white collar or golden collar worker at a multinational company? All of the above count. Nevertheless, I want to add more, it will be too superficial, or short-sighted if it is just these. In the long term, as the old Chinese sayings describe it vividly, 'don't see the forest for the trees', or 'throw away the melon but pick up the seeds'. The real "immersing ourselves in society" is the cultural immersion."

“在侨界，很多人常常挂在嘴边的一句话是“我们要融入主流社会”。这个问题令我困惑了许久。什么叫融入主流？同社会名流、政府官员、国会议员在一起共进晚餐？还是能邀请他们出席华人活动？还是能在政府或者跨国公司担任金领、白领？这些当然都算，但我还想说，单单是这样认为未免过于世故和短视。从长远的观点来看，是只见树木不见森林。是丢了西瓜捡芝麻。真正的融入社会是文化的融入。”

“The spreading of culture and cultural integration should be implanting our innate Chinese culture in the local soil, allowing it to grow its roots and sprout. Otherwise, it's called “unaccustomed to the soil and water” (shuitubufu) and “fit into neither one category nor another (bulunbulei). The job to define what is the core in culture and what are the boundaries of culture is greatly challenging. I'm not talking about ideological thoughts here. To the majority of overseas Chinese, culture is about everyday clothing, eating, housing and transporting, it's all about what I see and what I hear. Culture is never an isolated thing. It should not used to compete for anything, there's nothing to show off. The oversea Chinese culture should learn from others' strong points to overcome one's own weakness. It's about learning from each other in order to survive and develop. We should be improving ourselves actively by doing the mutual learning, in order to avoid the awkward situation from the old saying that the orange grown in Huaibei is not an orange any more but the bitter one¹⁶.”

“文化的传播与融入应该是将我们所故有的中国文化置身于当地的土壤之中，使其生根发芽。否则，就是水土不服和不伦不类。文化的内涵和外延是广阔的也是难以定义的，对于绝大多数的海外

¹⁶ Many ancient sayings, including idiom and maxims become everyday wisdom for Chinese people. The saying of “jushenghuaibei zeweizhi (桔生淮北则为枳)” was originally recorded in the *Spring and Autumn of Master Yan* (yanzi chunqiu), a collection of the sixth century B.C. The literal meaning of the text is that the Mandarin orange is a Southern crop, and when it is planted in the northern environment, the taste changes dramatically. It generally refers to the idea that nature changes as the environment changes.

华人来说，抛开思想意识的因素，文化就是老百姓的衣食住行、眼见的，耳听的。文化不是孤立的，不是用来攀比的，更不是用来标榜的。海外中国文化只有在与西方文化的不断取长补短和相互学习中才能生存和发展；只有积极地“改良品种”才能避免“桔生淮北则为枳”的窘迫。”

It is important to note how Chinese people talk about cultural survival and development by focusing on a sense of cultivation that is embedded in the local environment, as well as on mutual learning. It is also interesting to see the characterization of the Chinese way of education in terms of an innate weakness, that of the modern “assembly line” style of industrialization. With the constant cultural contact between the West and the East, the self-critique of the East is always made through a Western lens. These ponderings also point to an ideal derived from a synergy, in terms of cultural identity, between cultural understanding and experiences; nevertheless there exists a performative side to the experience. This kind of synergy is highly appealing and aspiring particularly to these first-generation immigrants. Nevertheless, it takes time and effort to become immersed in the host culture. First-generation immigrants experience glass-ceiling-like barriers to advancement in cultural participation and immersion. Qing expresses his ambivalent feelings in one of his blog posts:

“(The Dragon Boat Race Festival) makes me think of Canadian Hockey, the annually most influential game in North America. In 2007, the Ottawa team made it to its first finals in almost one hundred years ... I was lucky to watch one of the winning games live. Though I don’t recall the whole game, I will always remember the scenes of the audience for my whole life. It was a blast, an ecstasy, and the whole stadium was filled up with great excitement. It became all red like an ocean (red is the team color for Ottawa team). I have only seen such a scene in a movie or on TV before. However, I don’t understand why I couldn’t see any Chinese people other than my son and me in the stadium. Many Chinese parents are willing to line up in freezing weather for one or two days to register their kids in the best high school; many tighten their belts to save money, to send their kids to a pricey private school, but they won’t pay

for a game like this, an unparalleled cultural baptism. I don't understand this. I don't understand how Chinese people think. I ask to myself at the same time, if the tickets were not given to me by the company, would I be willing to spend \$500 or \$600 on them?"

“由此我想到每年北美赛时最长影响最大的联盟杯冰球赛。07年渥太华经过近百年之后又一次闯入决赛。……我有幸观看了其中取胜的一场。比赛的过程早已忘记，但观众的场面和情景让我终身难忘。那种狂欢的场面、那种群情激愤的情绪和弥漫在整个场内场外的红色的海洋。那样的情景我只在电影和电视中见过。但令我不解的是赛场内外除了我和我儿子之外，我始终没有见到第二个华人。我们很多华人为了子女可以进最好的高中，可以在天寒地冻中排上一两天的队，可以用省吃俭用的钱送子女进私立学校，却不肯自己掏腰包观看一场世纪难得的体育比赛而享受一次真正的文化洗礼。对此，我不能理解，我不理解我们华人的思维，其实这也包括我自己，我问过我自己，如果这张入场卷不是公司免费赠送的，我会自己掏5, 6百元的钱去买票吗？”

While appreciating “foreign” cultures might not be as natural as breathing the air, neither is teaching/learning Chinese in a non-native environment. It usually requires a whole family's extra effort to encourage the learning of Chinese. As previously described, some parents and grandparents answer the call of teaching together, which includes taking a teacher's role at the language school. Qing told me that his father-in-law, his child's grandfather, has cared very much about his son studying Chinese. In a family letter, the grandfather encouraged his grandson to learn traditional Chinese (guwen 古文) and therefore to be able to read some articles written in traditional Chinese. Traditional Chinese is rarely used today in either verbal or written communication; however, there are quite a lot of Chinese words and phrases such as idioms (chengyu 成语) in everyday use that can be traced back to ancient stories and allegories. In the letter, the grandfather talked to the grandchild about the importance of studying traditional Chinese, and encouraged him by showing his

willingness to learn together with him. This togetherness is also a strategy of affection to teach and pass on cultural knowledge.

While some teachers included either an aesthetic or affective component in their teaching approach, other teachers advocated a distancing strategy to Chineseness. Ji is such an example as he phrases a big part of his teaching as “de-sinicization (qu zhongguohua 去中国化)”. Ji told me he felt “embarrassed” by such bad manners as speaking loudly in public, as is often seen in restaurants based on his own observations of other Chinese people. He made his own cultural observations and comparisons of some behaviors in public. He concluded that “ridding the bad and preserving the good”, a strategy echoed in *Lu Xun*¹⁷'s proposition in an article on “Bring-it-here-ism” (Nalai zhuyi 拿来主义). *Lu Xun*'s original exhortation, written in 1934, was “Taking the essence in, ridding the dross” (Qu qi jinghua, qu qi zaopo, 取其精华, 去其糟粕), a strategic resolution to face imperialism and colonialism at the time, though there is a dichotomy between what is presumably “Chinese” or “Han” culture and what is foreign culture in its connotation. *Lu Xun* wrote:

“China has a so-called tradition of “Seclusion-ism”, we don't go out, and allow others no entering. Since the gate was fired on and broken by guns and armories, bumped seriously as a consequence, things became all “Send-it-over-ism. ...

However, none of us follow a manner of “reciprocity” and claim, “Bring-it-here!”

“中国一向是所谓“闭关主义”，自己不去，别人也不许来。自从给枪炮打破了大门之后，又碰了一串钉子，到现在，成了什么都是“送去主义”了。.....

但我们没有人根据了“礼尚往来”的仪节，说道：拿来！..... ”

¹⁷ Lu Xun (1881-1936) is one of renowned Chinese intellectuals and writers in twentieth century. He has long been considered as the leading figure of Chinese modern literature, or else the leading May fourth writers of “New Literature”. Many of his writings including the short story of “A madman's Diary” (appeared in *New Youth*, which is a left-wing magazine in April 1918), is considered an insight into the Chinese “national character”, traditions, culture and society. See more discussion on Lu Xun and his legacy in Lee (1985).

Since the May Fourth Movement, borrowing and reflecting on what is good, better or advanced from the “foreign” has always been an inevitable question to ponder throughout the process of Chinese modernization. Since the First Opium War (1839-1842), the centralized power of imperial China was largely weakened by so-called Western “civilization” in almost every respect. The “Bring-it-here-ism” according to *Lu Xun* should be practiced in a reciprocal way and should give new meanings to the idea of *sinicization* but under different political, social, and economic conditions and power relations. *Sinicization* can be understood as the Chinese equivalent to America’s melting pot. Those who are able to have a chance to study, work or live abroad might be looked up to by most Chinese who remain in China as having better life opportunities. The kind of exposure and experience afforded to those living in a more modern Western culture are considered superior to those without similar opportunities. As gaining more exposure and experience are considered ways of learning, it is therefore believed that the best way to learn is to live in “foreign” places just like those immigrant people who are able to access the “essences” of both cultures, yet are often restrained by a dichotomized thinking of East/West. The idea of absorbing the essence from both cultures is shared by Qing’s thoughts on mutual learning.

There is a subtle consciousness among Chinese people who live overseas. To ability “assimilate” good qualities or “advanced” cultural, and/or scientific knowledge, things that are considered lacking in China, is thought to be more commonly available in the “West”. For people living in the “West”, the “West” or the “Other” is transformed into or replaced by “here” within the West. The “here-within-the-west” version of Chineseness is doubly “*sinicized*” into a version of Chinese culture and cultural preservation performed, for example, by these activating teachers. The

strategy of “taking-the-essence-in” has been employed by many Chinese with overseas experiences and a closer comprehension of both cultures since the early days of Chinese modernization. It is understandable that teaching Chinese at the same time also demands an absorption and modification of an imagined China. Chinese’s rich history is a treasured resource for appropriation. One teacher told me:

“The Tang dynasty was indeed a result of contacts and encounters with foreign racial groups, the Yuan, and the Mongol. It might be seen as original at that point of time. ... There is no pristine national culture without “Other” cultures. One study shows Li Bai is a ‘foreigner’.”

“唐朝与外族接触，吸收外来文化，当时是原汁原味的.....没有一个民族的文化是不受外来文化影响的。李白，根据研究，是外族人。”

(Ji, Informant Interview)

“China has got really good stuff, kept well in forms: Tang’s poem, to preserve the good values and as well as aesthetic values, Tang (dynasty) Shi (poetry), Song (dynasty) ci (lyric poetry), Yuan (dynasty) qu (plays and songs, from peak eras (in Chinese history), so much still full of vitality.”

“中国有好的东西，（形式上），唐诗，宋词，元曲，高峰的东西，审美，价值上保留，仍有生命力。”

(Ji, Informant Interview)

In response to the complication beyond the typical adequacy/lack, advanced/the lame, and the East/West binaries, the tactics of teaching become poignant:

“To elude it (the complexity of culture) by teaching something in neutral. To teach them (the children) something least debatable since the children are yet to be able to make sound judgment. I wish more de-Chineseness in the specificity of teaching. Otherwise, it only (in Chinese culture) causes more confusion. Teachable topics, for example, are politeness, caring for other people, and being honest, those good values.”

“绕开讲，讲地中性一点，教给他没有争议的东西，尤其在他/她没有能力辨别的时候，否则只能带给他/她们很多困惑，教一些‘去中国化’的东西，好的价值，比如教讲礼貌，关心他人是好的，诚实是好的。”

(Ji, Informant Interview)

Ji's deployment of distancing and appropriation at one level seems to be a reduction to Western middle-class etiquette. At the same time, it has an underlying reference to the ethnic and moral qualities of Chinese culture. To put it in a cultural insider's perspective, being Chinese also means to follow certain proper rules of behavioral etiquette (that fall largely within cultural norms) rather than ideas, an appropriation of the notion of 'li' (literally ritual) which looms over Chinese traditions and culture (Cohen 1991). This kind of "li" could be just remnant behaviors that came from one's socializing patterns in the way that social relations used to be (though according to the ideas of Chinese intellectual elites). People's strategies are inevitably filtered through their experience of living in, for example a non-Chinese context. Each person leads an individual "cultural anthropological" project living in a society, comparing and contrasting cultural phenomena, most likely fragmented cultural elements, via their everyday social and cultural experiences. This sheds some light on Qing's observations and ambivalent feelings towards participating in the hockey game. Li's feeling of embarrassment towards the acceptable Chinese norm of, for example, speaking loudly in public spaces as compared to that of the "westerners", also reflects the frictions of living under different social norms.

Besides an attempt to justify a distancing strategy in teaching at certain points, Li's account resonates with other teachers, for example Qing, by focusing on the emotional dimension of the learning experience. The experience of learning, which is collectively made up by everyday interactions, communication, as well as memories, is believed to offer cultural identification to a great extent. The teachers served as either role models for being Chinese, or active agents in articulating and appropriating a personalized version of Chineseness during social interactions.

“It will become (their) memories in the future, their experience in school, what is talked about with parents at home, those will be passed on, a familiarity, a sense of closeness from getting along with other Chinese people. Like to give them a pleasant experience of traveling or touring, which would make a great memory to enhance their senses of identification.”

“(希望在中文学校的经验能)成为成长中的记忆。在中文学校，在家里平时父母谈到的，都是一种传递，和别人相处时的那种熟悉感，亲切感。（让他们）象体验愉快的旅游一样，形成美好的记忆，加强认同感。”

(Ji, Informant Interview)

“The children (from Chinese families) are just like those illiterate people, they can speak only a little (Chinese); few can read and write. To master the language is comparatively less important to these kids who live their life in Canada. What counts is the inheritance of the (Chinese) culture.”

“这（中国家庭的）孩子都不跟文盲一样嘛，会说一点（中文），不会读不会写。语言对在加拿大生活的他们（孩子们）来说不重要。重要的是文化延续。”

(Sha, Informant Interview)

Ai was introduced to me as a model teacher by Principal Ping, for Ai was “more patient (naixin 耐心) and skillful with younger children”, and “we put good teachers in younger age classes, to get our children to develop their interests in Chinese at their earliest age” added Ping. Ai had been appointed to teach at the kindergarten level and at Grade 1 classes for several years, while other teachers usually advance each year with their students. Ai has spent time engaging children by singing, dancing and story-telling activities. She focuses her topics on cultural elements like seasonal changes and festivals from both the host country and the country of origin. The themes of her lyrics include seasonal changes, natural phenomena like snow, and cultural festivals present in both cultures such as Halloween and Chinese National Day (by reference to Canada Day). She composes children’s lyrics by herself and teaches them to children for them to sing along. Ai laid out her thoughts on how to make

Chinese culture relevant to these children, and she admitted the reduction to, for example, a few simple poems is inevitable.

In the context of heritage language teaching and learning, the notion of the core of culture and the boundaries of culture, or the term of “roots” are often discussed. There are casual, or utilitarian attitudes towards language among the community members, which reflect their views on the preservation of cultural heritage and cultural roots. The discussions induce some nostalgic feelings among the teachers and parents. Wen claimed he had a rather casual (wusuowei 无所谓) attitude towards “cultural roots”. Wen challenged my question whether there is something called roots at all. “Where are the roots?” “Nowhere is there a root”, he said, answering to his own question. He chose to adapt to the present as he sees culture disappearing all the time. “Precisely because ‘culture’ will be disappearing, people are keen to preserve it, and get a hold of it.” He stated he is less attached to where we come from – China. He thinks the attachment comes from an absence from time and space. It is an aggregate of memories imbued with emotions while being away from “home” that have accumulated. The strong attachment to the home or motherland is especially questionable while living in a more and more globalized society, and a technological society, since the sense of time and space has been transformed by technology. “We are not nostalgic any more, since nowadays we can easily pick up the mobile phone and call home. Even my father living in the country has two cell phones”. Nevertheless, while he might claim to have little attachment to home, he has his own way of being nostalgic. Feeling an absence of the present and missing what we could have missed over “there” contributes to this nostalgia. At certain times, Wen told me in an enthusiastic tone about his achievements before coming to Canada, in terms of both school and career. Wen is not the only case. Many Chinese immigrants are

“Skilled Workers and Professionals”, which is one of the categories in the immigrant point system. Competing in the labour market in Canada, these immigrants have a constant dilemma as far as career development is concerned. Returning to China is pondered, with the question of whether or not to be involved in a more prosperous and progressive China, while staying in Canada is another option. Wen always claimed that staying was a decision good for the whole family. He comforted himself by resorting to reading ancient Chinese poems, in which he saw reflections of his own personal experience in the historical narrations. He recited lines from Tao’s famous essays and poems like “Peach Blossom Shangri-la (Tao Hua Yuan Ji 桃花源记)”, and “Drinking Wine (Yin Jiu 饮酒)¹⁸” written more than one thousand five hundred years ago in the Jing Dynasty (AD 317-420). Tao’s writing is recognized for painting an

¹⁸I use the Chinese and English version translated by David Hindon in *The Selected Poems of T'ao Ch'ien*, 1993, Copper Canyon Press for Tao Yuanming’s poem cited.

《饮酒》

结庐在人境，而无车马喧。□
 问君何能尔，心远地自偏。□
 采菊东篱下，悠然见南山。□
 山气日夕佳，飞鸟相与还。□
 此中有真意，欲辩已忘言。

(Translation) Drinking Wine

I live in town without all the racket
 Horses and carts stir up, and you wonder

How that could be. Wherever the mind
 Dwells apart is itself a distant place.

Picking chrysanthemums at my east fence,
 Far off, I see South Mountain: mountain

Air lovely at dusk, birds in flight
 Returning home. All this means something

Something absolute. Whenever I start
 Explaining it, I’ve forgotten the words.

ideal life of rusticity appreciated by many educated Chinese. The term “Tao Hua Yuan” is almost the Chinese equivalent of the concept of “utopia”, a life of self-sufficiency and freedom in a Taoist manner. In his poetry, Tao speculated much on “dwelling’ and “idleness (xian 闲)” to lead a life in “tzu-jan (ziran 自然)”, a Taoist term meaning naturalness and spontaneity, and thus revealing a speculative relationship with the self, the nature and the world (Hinton 1993). Tao is a role model to Wen in leading a natural life of spontaneity in Canada. The practice of reading Chinese poetry offers a spiritual comfort according to Wen:

“(By reading the poems) I pursue something spiritual, to counter the pressure in everyday life, for example reading “Tao Hua Yuan Ji”, (it’s about) spiritual but not material. By reciting Tang poems it makes me feel that life is beautiful ... ‘I live in town without all the racket horses and carts stir up, ... Picking chrysanthemums at my east fence, far off, I see South Mountain ...’. This is what Chinese culture represents. It is about (a capability or wisdom) to leap out of the mundane life. I am in delight by rehearsing Tang poetry and Song lyrics, this is the part I want to pass on (to the children) .”

“追求一种精神境界（来）面对生活的压力，读“桃花源记”。没有物质上的东西，直接背唐诗，生活还是很美好，“[]结庐在人境，而无车马喧’；‘采菊东篱下，悠然见南山’”。中国文化的那种东西，能够让他跳出来，我自己背唐诗宋词产生一种愉悦，这一块是我想传授的。”

(Wen, Informant Interview)

Wen appreciated an imagined ideal life recorded more than one thousand five hundred years ago. What he wants to pass on to his children’s generation is a rustic way of living against today’s hectic consumer society. He emphasizes the spiritual side of everyday life: for example, reading Chinese poems. To learn traditional Chinese is believed to be an important component of mastering the Chinese culture. Reading and writing Chinese poems among other artistic skills such as calligraphy, symbolizes the cultural practices of the elite. It is almost impossible for children in

¹⁹ The two lines recited by Wen are line 1 and line 3 from one of the “Drinking Wine” pieces. A complete version of the poems can be referred to Footnote 18 on Page 107 in this chapter.

diaspora to learn as much Chinese as some of the teachers, or parents, would wish. Teaching Chinese through poems is often practiced, as learning and reciting (chanting) ancient Chinese poems is a tradition in studying. The pure and simple form of Chinese poems is said to be suitable for learning by children. The meaning is comprehensive and deep. Culture disappears in time, but some forms of culture, with their symbolic power, still survive. Many poems were written by Chinese intellectuals to the emperor during their time away from political posts to express their discontent with the pursuit of a political career, as well as their resistance to it. Across the expanse of time, the poems are still relevant to the Chinese as a way to appreciate life with simple delight. At least on one level, Chinese people feel a connection to these poems that point to Chinese values and wisdom. Such cultural forms like poems offer avenues for constructing cultural identities. Besides poems, other informants also talked about using such other cultural forms as calligraphy, Peking Opera, Si He Yuan (literally meaning a courtyard surrounded by four buildings, a type of residence in northern China), and Chinese characters (text) itself as some of the representations or symbols of Chinese culture. Whether or not these “cultural symbols” can be seen as the “invented tradition” that implies continuity with the past (Hobsbawm 1983:1-14), to teach children to recite Chinese poems as a functional aspect of teaching and learning is in the hope of a transformation into an aesthetic component in living a better life in diaspora at a later time. An appreciative way of living happily provides a sense of comfort to face the challenges and hardships in the unpredictable future in diaspora.

Nowhere else does an individual Chinese in diaspora find the certainty of the “origin or authenticity” of culture. They are more apt to acknowledge the reality that “the disappearance of culture is inevitable”. My informants felt suspicious,

somewhere deep inside, of holding on to their “culture” through the language to a certain degree. However, they continued to conduct the teaching no matter that language is a consciously or unconsciously ideological, or psychological attachment. The act of teaching is part of their personal contribution to being Chinese, which enlarges a space for different interpretations of being Chinese and especially for my “intrusion” as a researcher. The relationship between the individual and the community is dialectically dynamic. Practicing teaching is an avenue to actively construct their cultural milieu in order to assert their unique cultural identities as Chinese to the children. At the same time, the praxis of teaching might gain acceptance and recognition within a larger community, if more non-Chinese students are involved. The community in diaspora relies on the agency of individual members to collectively perform identity to a wider multicultural society.

My description and rumination on the practices of teaching, and its relevance to cultural meaning in the notion of Chineseness illustrates the work of linguistic philosopher J.L. Austin in his book *How to Do Things With Words* (1962). Austin offers an analytical distinction between language as a communicative medium for conveying information and messages, and as a series of actions accompanied by the communication itself. When the teachers explained their teaching at the Chinese school, the word teaching was accompanied by many other actions: “*I’ve been preparing my own teaching and learning materials*”; “*I thought about being a teacher at various points in my life, and here I am.*” Embodied literacy and cultural knowledge are translated into the practice of teaching, including preparing lesson plans, discussing and sharing how to reach other community members, and negotiating and reflecting on the meaning of being a Chinese. During teaching, teachers execute various interpretations and representations on Chineseness.

The notion of Chineseness is by all means an abstract concept. Chinese poems have preserved aspects of culture in written form. The students, learning materials, and class arrangements are all new in Chinese-Canadian contexts. This is an issue of appropriation, which entails personal appropriation and the performance of cultural meanings. The meaning of being Chinese is implicitly transformed through the practice of teaching Chinese to young Chinese Canadians. It always depends on an individual's own interpretation and appropriation. Teaching reveals a great deal about the subject's position, social experiences and cultural identities that are defined under the term or category of "Chinese". The practices of teaching create a site for articulating a Chinese cultural identity. It fosters one culturally significant relationship in Chinese culture: the relationship between teacher and student in a new diasporic context. The relationship binds the school-community at present, with the ancestors in the imagined nation. The present acts of teaching situate in the school based on the personal immigrant experience. The practice of teaching is not only valuable for the children but also for the experienced members of the community themselves. These practitioners are role models for the younger generation to certain extent. The teaching derives from their pasts, and is not only invested in the present, but also in the future for a life in diaspora. How to make the past of being Chinese transferable to performing Chineseness beyond the past and into the present? This leaves a question, as well as opens a space for a syncretic living among all Chinese in diaspora. This resonates with the call for "being in the beyond", as Bhabha (1994:7) describes it:

"Being in the 'beyond', then, is to inhabit an intervening space, ... But to dwell 'in the beyond' is also, ... to be part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; to touch the future on its hither side. In that sense, then, the intervening space 'beyond', becomes a space of intervention in the here and now."

Talking about “being in the beyond”, Bhabha refers to the work of chicano performance artists and the hybrid aesthetic known as “Rasquachismo”, which means “the utilization of available resources for syncretism, juxtaposition, and integration. ... a sensibility attuned to mixtures and confluence. ...a delight in texture and sensuous surfaces ... self-conscious manipulation of materials or iconography ... the combination of found material and satiric wit.” I propose the practice of teaching can be further investigated through the concept of hybridity. The theoretical direction of hybridity requires further ethnographic research to analyze the performance of teaching in and out of the classrooms/schools among the language teachers.

My approach of a comparative interpretation

The immediate challenge for my teaching was to frame the context for learning content and make a connection with the students’ with respect to their current lives. Everything had to be done in a limited time of two-and-a-half hours per week. “They don’t think they are Chinese”, another teacher warned. Many times I felt disoriented or even powerless to explain the “Chinese Culture” well enough to these children. Explaining one point in the text required an abundance of other culturally meaningful contexts. I felt that I was also an intruder in the classroom at some points in time, with a conscious awareness of my research identity. I am not sure whether this should have triggered more uncertainty, or more certainty in teaching children Chinese.

Almost all children tended to speak English/French whenever they spoke to their peers, despite “policing” from the teachers and parents. This inevitably points to the power of the dominant linguistic habitus (Hanks 2005) that the children are socialized into in Canada. With regard to linguistic pedagogy, I kept reminding myself to neither over- nor under-estimate the literacy or language levels of my students. Nevertheless I knew I would inevitably make a generalization about these young children, as if they

shared the same level of cultural knowledge. I am able to recall the “ambition” as well as the anxiety I experienced while trying to explain one learning point as it mushroomed into many culturally relevant contexts. Without proper teachers training in Canada, my benchmark for students’ learning experiences, particularly at the beginning, was largely based on my assumption that Chinese had been learned as the first language; the fact that it was not so for the students made my teaching at the school problematic. I grappled with the anxiety, which I believe is similar to the experience of those who teach English as a second language. I felt relieved after hearing similar stories from other teachers. Nevertheless, the perspective I found is not fully commensurate with what my students faced in their learning, in particular the level of motivation of learning, and the power dynamic between English and Chinese, in particular in the context of all immigrants’ lives. On reflection, my teaching shed new light on the last two lines of Tao Yuanming’s poem of “Drinking Wine”:

“Something absolutely true. But whenever I started 此中有真意，
Explaining it, the words escaped me. 欲辩已忘言。”

Throughout the practice of teaching, I might not be exactly like what was described in “whenever I started explaining it, I’ve forgotten the words”. I did feel speechless in explaining and interpreting in Chinese. The notion of Chineseness in my teaching has never become ‘absolute’ not only to me, but also to other practitioners. I had to make decisions regarding which version of “Chineseness” I would use, depending on the communicative contexts I needed to espouse or teach. The communicative contexts in the Saturday language school also loom to a large context in my everyday life outside of the school. The challenges I faced echo those faced by parents in their everyday teaching. As Wen told me:

“I have to explain so much more as I speak of Beijing, or the Forbidden

City. They (the children) know nothing.”

“跟他们讲北京，讲故宫，什么都得讲一大堆，他们什么都不知道。”

(Sha, Informant Interview)

“The problem is, for example, if I talked about the bitter past, like meat was rare in a daily meal. He (my son) would not understand at all, since he grows up here in Canada and has no reference to the kind of life we had.”

“问题是，如果我跟他（孩子）过去艰苦的生活，吃不到肉，他不会理解。因为他是在加拿大长大的，他不会懂那样的生活。”

(Wen, Informant Interview)

I consciously made the relevance or connection to the current context in teaching to make my point. When teaching a text on a recognized painter in modern China, for instance, I downloaded pictures of the artwork and brought them to the classroom to give my students a sensual feel of the artist living in his own historical context. I introduced him with the perspective that he was also a Chinese in diaspora. Much out-of-classroom work was demanded in teaching, for example doing a comparison and contrast as far as some cultural elements were concerned. I also found I was lacking in Canadian cultural knowledge and history. I had to constantly make strategic decisions on the choices of the teaching and learning materials. At the same time, I feared that my explanations in isolation would be misleading to my students. I was hesitant to use the term “Chinese culture” since, because of my training in Cultural Anthropology, I know how complex the notion of “culture” is, beyond simply a reference to that which is the same or different from Canadian culture. My teaching had to be student-specific too. For my Grade 7 class, I spent time in the first class in order to phase in my own style of teaching, in order to inspire my students’ own practice of everyday comparison and contrast. For my students in the Special Class, I prepared handouts to give my adult students some punch or “a memorable take-away”,

while preparing a lyric for young students to sing along. I'm not the only one who experienced the challenge of teaching Chinese in its native contexts

“(The difficulty is that) Chinese has to be understood in its complicated contexts. What I can do is to translate the Chinese into English, in a way that he (the son) can understand.”

“中文重意境（所以难）。我只能编成英文讲给他听，用他能理解的方式讲。”

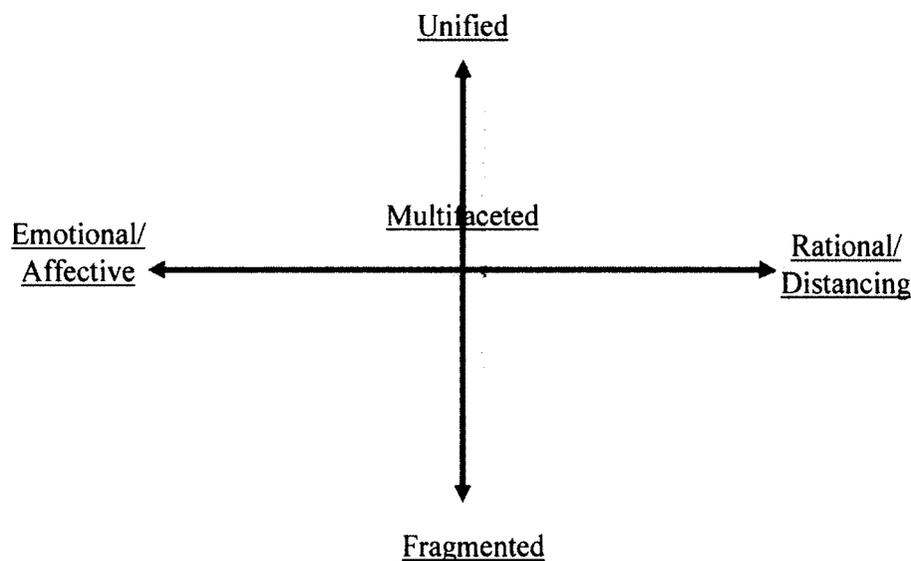
(Wen, Informant Interview)

Summary

The inter-subjective experience I gained from my fieldwork leads me to an understanding that the notion of Chineseness is collectively shared out of various personalized versions of Chineseness. Practicing Chinese elites' social and cultural etiquette including appreciating Chinese ancient art forms including the Chinese language, nostalgia of a past, and a synergy between the East and West or filtering through the West are some of the representations of individualized notions of Chineseness. When the notion of Chineseness is expressed and articulated as a divergence of personal trajectories, social relationships and positions in a social network, and an imagining of one's own appropriation of history and culture, strategies of constructing an individualized version of Chineseness can be discerned and mapped along two axes (see Illustration 5). In the diagram, I attempt to sort out the different strategies of teachers for constructing a Chinese cultural identity through teaching language and culture by placing them along four dimensions: unified/fragmented, and emotional or affective/rational or distancing. The affective approach is characterized by its focus on affective subtleties among Chinese family and social relationships. This is of great relevance to the diasporic community who possess comparatively limited social networks beyond their immediate families. Other

teachers voiced a distancing or *de-sinicizing* approach, based on both Chinese intelligentsia's May Fourth Movement tradition and on individuals' cross-cultural experiences. The fragmented refers to a sketch offering a sound exposure to the cultural knowledge to the students in particular, with many constraints on teaching conditions. The strategy of unification is employed among a few who aptly show their ability in articulating and performing through Chinese language. The approach is highly appealing yet challenging; however, it can be achieved through personal narrations to a certain extent regardless of how contested the meaning of Chineseness is.

Illustration 5: Strategies of teaching



In this chapter, I have also argued that the practice of teaching Chinese is a site of teachers' agency. As their embodied language knowledge and skills become objectified and transformed as cultural knowledge on Chineseness, the individual immigrant takes on a role of making different links among various discourses of Chineseness. I have attempted to offer a nuanced analysis of personalized discourse on Chinese cultural identities among those who take active roles in teaching Chinese language and culture by examining the differences in their approaches.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

"[T]he struggle to perceive certain borders of my own perspective is not an end in itself but a precondition for efforts of attentiveness, translation, and alliance."

-- James Clifford, *Routes* (1997,12)

This thesis project contributes insights into the construction and representation of Chinese cultural identity embedded in the various activities of individuals involved in teaching Chinese as a heritage language. The goal of my thesis research has been to explore and examine the construction of cultural identities among new Chinese immigrants who mainly come from the People's Republic of China. As language is "a critical resource of those who wish to understand the nature of culture and how cultural knowledge and beliefs are transmitted both from generation to generation and in everyday interaction" (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986, 114), and language and self are so closely bounded, the heritage or community language school as a public space of learning outside the family environment becomes a critical site of inquiry. Immigrants hold the belief that to master one's mother language is fundamental if one would presume to retain one's cultural identity. Although just how strenuous the efforts one should make to keep his or her cultural identity is still debatable, among immigrant families and communities, teaching some Chinese language to children is considered a "naturalized" practice to pass down certain aspects of Chinese cultural knowledge to the children's generation. The teacher, as the linguistic representative of Chinese in migration, is propelled to a certain extent by their taken-for-granted linguistic and cultural capabilities and identities to take the role of teaching in the community. Therefore, the language teachers' beliefs, attitudes towards the "Chineseness", and everyday practices at a local Chinese language school meshed with their larger immigration experiences thus speak directly to the construction and negotiation of

cultural identities. In other words, I locate Chinese cultural identities at the intersection between culturally saturated practices – most prominently, teaching- and the meanings of “Chineseness” out of which individual immigrants make sense of their lives. In this thesis, I use the term “Chineseness” in my writing as a conceptual entity, a subject that resonates with the different approaches to Chinese cultural belongings. I have explored the notion of “Chineseness” and analyzed various contextual communicative situations.

Ethnographic research as a tool of cultural understanding is practiced through layers of translation and interpretation (Agar, 2011). The construction of being Chinese in the context of teaching Chinese is also about translation and interpretation between at least two languages and cultures. I argue that the subjects, including both the teachers and the researcher, attempt to establish various tangible and intangible connections to their country of origin in order to make sense of their cultural identities, not only via the language school in physical space, but also through the abstract linguistic representations of roots (*gen*), emotional complexes (*qingjie*), and taste/flavors (*weidao*) as representations of Chinese culture, and of Chinese itself as a language. Their attempts to construct individualized versions of Chineseness, if not the culturally ideal Chinese, which may not necessarily receive affirmation among other social and cultural categories assigned to the Chinese.

Ethnographic observation and participation combined with in-depth interviews can offer the researcher great room to make sense of people’s everyday behaviour. The collection and interpretation of ethnographic data is based on intersubjective experiences from the fieldwork. It draws on my knowledge and experiences both as a cultural insider and as an outsider – a phenomenon that could be referred to as “the professional stranger” (Agar, 1980). I argue that the understanding of how individual

immigrants make sense of their cultural identity and imagination or re-imagination of “Chineseness” relies on the actual and active participation by taking the role of teaching in the community and language school. “Being there” freshens the understanding of the everyday situation of living in and through language between Canada and China as a new immigrant. The microanalyses at the site reveals that the Chinese Language School creates a context of convergence imbued with various articulations of being Chinese and of Chinese culture with a capital “C”. Locality in the social life of Chinese in diaspora is cultivated by the individual’s experience of the past, the present and beyond the present, as the teachers’ agentic practices embody versions of Chineseness in the plural. Moreover, an individual version of Chineseness is reinforced by their practices of both articulating and performing as a Chinese. The interpretation (analysis) of data is based on more experience with a spirit of reflexivity after comparatively extensive time spent participating and interacting in the field. I have found that content and context are inseparable in constructing meaningful cultural identity. The praxis of heritage language teaching and learning creates a context as situations for constructing cultural identities. One conclusion that can be drawn from my ethnographic research is that “Hai Pi” is more than just a place for linguistic or literacy development. Neither is it limited to serving as a school community. It is a node of the diasporic Chinese social network in and beyond the host country. The language school has created a node in this diasporic social network beyond family, from which the individual immigrant employs either to reinforce or negotiate their transient identities in formation.

The Chinese language school as a node in diasporic social network

The microanalyses at the site reveal that the Chinese Language School, Hai Pi, which is institutionally categorized as an “International Languages Program” by

Ontario school board policies, is more than a place for linguistic or literacy development. It becomes a node of the diasporic Chinese social network in and beyond the community in the host country. Locality in the social life of Chinese immigrants is cultivated by the individual's experiences of the past, the present and beyond the present.

The language school is a specific space of diasporic community. Teaching and learning Chinese in many ways engages adult immigrants, especially the first generation of immigrants, more than it does the children. The language school reveals itself as a liminal zone, as well as a hybrid space. It is both a language school and a continuing education program, both a language school and a community in diaspora, both a performance of imagined community and a node of the trans-local social network. New social groups and networks in the host country are formed. New layers of personalized Chineseness are constructed and negotiated through the encounters in the new social networks. Practices in the Chinese language school are a significant node connecting everyday immigrants' lives outside home and work. Individual Chinese dwelling in the host country conduct regular "travel" into the exemplary places and spaces like the Chinese language school, moving between the familiar and unfamiliar within their new city of residence, between assimilation and differentiation, between the past and the present, and between the real world and re-imagination.

The language school plays multiple functional roles, creating streams of micro-contexts of being a Chinese in convergence. The learning and teaching in the language school setting go beyond the family learning environment, but are not merely limited to the community. The language school in the community acts as a terminal in immigration and dwelling among different generations of Chinese in diaspora or migration. Members from the Chinese community have created a context of

convergence imbued with various interpretations of being Chinese and of Chinese culture.

Teaching as a form to construct a Chinese cultural identity in Canada

An agentic role of Chinese teaching is recognized, as I look into the conditions of the practices of teaching. Community members, who act as the language teachers, practice teaching at the language school while, together with other community members including parents and children, creating an appropriated space to construct and negotiate their cultural identities. I argue that the practice of teaching Chinese can be seen as a form to construct and negotiate cultural identity for new immigrants. The teachers' agentic practices embody versions of Chineseness in the plural. I have identified a few patterns in teaching strategies, which teachers connect to broader cultural meanings. Each individual's version of Chineseness is reinforced by both his or her personal practices and reflections on being Chinese.

My description of individual members' interpretations of Chineseness represents the complexity of diasporic communities. The practice of teaching embodies the individual's sense of Chineseness. Their beliefs of Chinese teaching and learning, as well as strategies in teaching represent personal choices largely reflecting one's conception, construction, and negotiation of Chinese cultural identity. These strategies illustrate the "becoming" of Chinese cultural identities in Hall's sense (1996). The key characteristic in the process of "becoming" is, by and large, to make meaningful connections with Chinese history, language and cultural forms based on personal experiences. The approach taken is identified as first, to keep distant from, second, to transform, and third, to be affective to one's cultural identity. The practice of language teaching also requires one's own self-reflectivity and active participation in one's cultural identity. Through the practices of teaching, the teachers negotiate

and reflect on their own versions of Chineseness. These *personal versions* of Chineseness do not generally conform to a unified language and national ideology of Chinese from their country of origin, but are inevitably influenced by the position of Chinese as a minority, yet widely utilized, language in the host country (emphasis added in italic). As the teachers face many challenges in teaching in a comparatively de-contextualized environment of the language school in diaspora, it also offers room for constructing, articulating, and living out their Chinese identities. On the one hand, the ways of what and how the teachers teach the children are projections of their own positions in terms of cultural identification, both as Chinese and as a Canadian visible minority. Taking the role of teacher causes a shift in the position or perspective of being Chinese. On the other hand, new meanings of Chineseness out of the content of teaching are created and established among the subjects (teachers), no matter how these teachers attempt to fix the meanings of cultural identities in executing their strategies, which are still logo-centric to a larger extent in the context of teaching. In addition, it also comes to my attention that these teaching strategies carry certain similarities to tactics used by cultural anthropologists such as combining distancing and engaging affectively and empathetically in the field, comparing and reflecting, though the teachers' strategies might be fairly personal idiosyncrasies. Nevertheless, the teaching reveals the agentive nature, or sensitivity of meaning making lying and dozing in every living human.

Questions for further research

There are many “what if” scenarios related to the discussion of the limitations of research; for example, there could be further inquiry into the cultural history of Chinese in diaspora if time and scope permitted. This research has gone through an evolutionary process. Looking back to my initial research design, there were many

changes I had to adapt to the “reality,” from searching for and narrowing the focus on several key informants, to modifying my research questions due to the conditions or events in the field. In other words, the whole research journey underwent many “interventions” of both expected and unexpected occurrences in the field. For example, I originally identified four primary categories of informants in the field, which included “Colleague-to-Colleague” (between other teachers and co-workers and me); “Superior and Subordinate” (between the principal and me); “Parents” who would be both my research informants, and collaborators in terms of language teaching; and “Teacher-Student”. After entering the field, I quickly became aware of the time limitations imposed by a master’s thesis, which might demand that I focus on one specific informant category. I made several consciously “strategic decisions” including participating and practicing the teacher’s role, so that I was able to gauge a subjective perspective. The decision helped me to narrow the scope of my master’s thesis, which necessitated the exclusion of the learners’ perspective on the part of the children in terms of how to be a Chinese. Learner’s perceptions and attitudes will therefore need closer examination in a separate study. It would be valuable to conduct more analyses on communicative competence of the children during the teaching and learning. Further research will be conducted with the other interlocutors of the communicative situation – the students or the children. Questions to be considered are as follows: In which forms do the students/children perceive, and claim their cultural identity? What linguistic practices, for example code switching, are undertaken that manifest their identities at school? How do they negotiate their cultural identities against different patterns or strategies of teaching? In addition, exploration with regard to appropriation and performance of Chineseness among generations of Chinese in diaspora would add great value to our understanding of the notion of

Chineseness. Notably I see a critical need to place language teaching within a larger culturally pedagogical background, in order to have a better anthropological understanding and comparison between cultures and study cultural groups.

Another cluster of research questions I plan to venture into in future research will delve into the role of information technology in forming the Chinese community in migration. The set of research questions might include inquiry into to what extent an ethnic community or “imagined community” is constituted in an era of increasing migration and the Internet? How are agentive members of the community related to each other by using technology-enabled communication? What are the generational gaps among Chinese in diaspora? Thanks to an increasing dependence on and use of an information-technology-enabled world, what happens in one country becomes easily relayed to another country through the Internet in no time. China has drawn much attention from the world recently, probably because of its strong economic growth over the past years. While more and more Chinese are able to access information and/or have real-world encounters with people from other cultures, cultural misunderstandings and conflicts are inevitable, which requires an insightful interpretation of cultural understanding. For Chinese living outside China, the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the Tibet Uprising in 2008, the Sichuan Earthquake in 2009, and the 2010 Shanghai Expo are events that is easily scalable through social media that draw much attention. Many made headlines in various media. These media-intensive events become “information artifacts” for people from various backgrounds to see China and Chinese people. What happened “out there” is easily transformed into a sense of what is happening “here” in an everyday context. Evolving from a television era to the age of the Internet, we have a more connected world regardless of the gaps in geographic space that shape people’s sense of reality. It makes for an increasingly

intertwined relationship between what is actually happening and what is imagined or perceived to be happening. In *“Imagined Communities”*, Anderson (1983) argued that the problem is largely due to non-face-to-face interaction among its members. Anderson’s analysis focused on the changing role of language in script and print technology. Gaps between what is imagined or perceived in this particular “on-screen” medium against what really happens in everyday life in the era of information technology motivated me to delve further into the question of how immigrant community members perceive themselves in relation to a nation and nation-in-distance.

Nevertheless, either with or without all the limits, my ethnographic writing is somewhat of an “impressionist’s tale” from various styles of narration (Goffman, 1959; Van Maanen 1988). At best, my ethnography can be only partial. What I have attempted to relate in this thesis is the product of intersubjective experiences shared with my informants in order to capture the ethnographic present.

Bibliography

- Agar, M. (2011). "Making Sense of One Other for Another: Ethnography as translation" in *Language and Communication*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 38-47.
- (1980). *The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography*. New York: Academic Press.
- Anderson, B. R. O. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Anderson, J. (2008). "Towards an Integrated Second-Language Pedagogy for foreign and community/heritage languages in multilingual Britain" in *Language Learning Journal*. Vol. 36, No. 1, 79-89.
- Ang, I. (2001). *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West*. London; New York: Routledge.
- (1998). "Can One Say No to Chineseness? Pushing the Limits of the Diasporic Paradigm" in *Boundary 2*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Modern Chinese Literary and Cultural Studies in the Age of Theory: Reimagining a Field), 223-242.
 - (1993). "To Be or Not to Be Chinese: Diaspora, culture and postmodern ethnicity" in *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1-17.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Austin, J. L. (. L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard U. P.
- B.A.N.A.N.A. Blogging Asia North American News and Activities. By the UGLY Chinese Canadians. www.urglychinesecanadian.com. Retreated in June 2010.
- Bandler, R., and Grinder, J. (1979). *Frogs into Princes: Neuro Linguistic Programming*. Moab, Utah: Real People Press.
- Bauman, R., and Sherzer, J. (1975). "The Ethnography of Speaking" in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 4, 95-119.
- Bauman, Z. (1996). From Pilgrim to Tourist – or a Short History of Identity. In Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (ed.) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Sage, London; Thousand Oaks, California
- Benjamin, W. (2007). *Illuminations*. Ed. and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt. Translated by Harry Zohn. Schocken Books. New York

- Bernard, H. R. (. R. (2002). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (3rd ed.). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Beynon, J., Ilieva, R., Dichupa, M., and Hirji, S. (2003). “Do You Know Your Language?” How Teachers of Punjabi and Chinese Ancestries Construct Their Family Languages in Their Personal and Professional Lives” in *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 2(1), 1.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Bloomfield, L. (1933). *Language*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc..
- Briggs, C. L. (1986). *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, M. J. (1996). *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Center for Chinese Studies.
- Brubaker, R., and Cooper, F. (2000). Beyond “identity”. *Theory and Society*, 29(1), 1-47.
- Canadian Heritage. Citizen Participation Branch. <http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/pc-cp/index-eng.cfm>. Retrieved in September 2011.
- Chen, Ping (2007). China. In Simpson (ed.) *Language and National Identity in Asia*, Page 141-167. Oxford University Press, Oxford; New York.
- Chomsky, N. (1975). *Reflections on Language* (1st ed.). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Chou, T. (1960). *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Clifford, J. (1994). “Diasporas” in *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Further Inflections: Toward Ethnographies of the Future), 302-338.
- (1988). *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
 - (1997). *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Cohen, Myron L. (1991). Being Chinese: The Peripheralization of Traditional Identity. In Tu Wei-ming (ed.) *The Living Tree: the Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*. Page 88-108. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California.
- Cohen, R. (2008). *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Milton Park, Abingdon: Oxon; New York: Routledge.

Con, H., and Wickberg, E. (1982). *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada*. Toronto: Published by McClelland and Stewart in association with the Multiculturalism Directorate, Dept. of the Secretary of State, and the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services Canada.

Cummins, J., and Danesi, M. (1990). *Heritage Languages: The Development and Denial of Canada's Linguistic Resources*. Toronto: Our Schools Our Selves Education Foundation.

Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2008). "Reading the World Through Words: Cultural Themes in Heritage Chinese Language Textbooks" in *Language and Education*. Vol. 22, No. 2, 95-113.

Darnell, R. (2001). *Invisible Genealogies: A History of Americanist Anthropology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

DeFrancis, J. (1984). *The Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

– DeFrancis, J. (1950). *Nationalism and Language Reform in China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Duff, Patricia A. (2008). Heritage Language Education in Canada. In Donna M. Brinton, Olga Kagan, and Susan Bauckus (ed.) *Heritage Language Education: A New Field Emerging*. New York: Routledge.

Duara, P. (1995). *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago and London.

Duranti, A. (2004). *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

– (2003). "Language as Culture in U.S. Anthropology: Three Paradigms" in *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 323-347.

– (2001). *Key Terms in Language and Culture*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Erickson, P. A., & Murphy, L. D. (2003). *A History of Anthropological Theory* (2nd ed.). Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press.

Feueverger, G. (1997). "On the Edges of the Map': a Study of Heritage Language Teachers in Toronto" in *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol. 13, Iss. 1, 39-53.

Gal, S. (1989). "Language and Political Economy" in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 18, 345-267.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Goldberg, D. T. (2004). *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader*. Basil Blackwell.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

Gumperz, J. J., and Cook-Gumperz, J. (2008). "Studying Language, Culture, and Society: Sociolinguistics or Linguistic Anthropology?" in *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 12(4), 532-545.

Hall, K., and Bucholtz, M. (1995). *Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self*. New York: Routledge.

Hall, S., and Du Gay, P. (1996). *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Handler, R. (1994). "Is 'Identity' a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?" In (ed.) John R. Gillis. *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

Hanks, William F. (2005). Pierre Bourdieu and the Practices of Language in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 34, 67-83

– (1999). "Indexicality" in *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*. Volume 9, Numbers 1-2, 124-126.

Harris, Grace G. (1989). "Concept of Individual, Self, and Person in Description and Analysis" in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 91, No. 3, 599-612

Harris, Harry (2009). "Black British, Brown British And British Cultural Studies" in *Cultural Studies*. Vol. 23, Iss. 4, 483-512.

He, A. (2001). "The Language of Ambiguity" in *Discourse Studies*, 3(1), 75-96.

Heller, M. (2007). *Bilingualism: A Social Approach*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Henry, Eric (2008). *Speaking English in Shenyang: Language and the Cosmopolitan Imagination in China*. Dissertation. Connell University.

Hill, J. H. (2008). *The Everyday Language of White Racism*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Hobsbawm, E. J. and Ranger, T. O. (1983&2007). *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hymes, D. H. (1974). *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

– (1964). *Language in Culture and Society: A Reader in Linguistics and Anthropology*. New York: Harper & Row.

- Isajiw, W. W. (1999). *Understanding Diversity: Ethnicity and Race in the Canadian Context*. Toronto: Thompson Educational Pub.
- Isajiw, W. W., Colalillo, G., and Makabe, T. (1981). *Ethnic Identity Retention*. [Toronto]: Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto.
- Jacques, M. (2009). *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Keating, E. (2000). “Current Issues in Linguistic Anthropology” in *Teaching Anthropology: Society for Anthropology in Community College Notes*. Volume 7, No. 1, 20-23.
- Tölölian, Khachig (1991). “The Nation-State and Its Others: In Lieu of a Preface” in *Diaspora: a Journal of Transnational Studies*. Vol. 1, Iss. 1, 3-7
- Kristof, N. D., and WuDunn, S. (1994). *China Wakes: The Struggle for the Soul of a Rising Power*. New York: Times Books.
- Kroskrity, Paul (2004). Language Ideology. In Alessandro Duranti (ed.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lee, O. L. (1985). *Lun Xun and His Legacy*. University of California Press.
- International Language Programs (IL). Continuing Education at Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, at <http://www.ocdsb.ca/programs/continweb/Pages/default.aspx>. Retreated in 2010.
- Li, P. S. (2002). *Destination Canada: Immigration Debates and Issues*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- (1999). *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada (2nd ed. ed.)*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
 - (1988). *The Chinese in Canada*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Lentin, A. (2005). “Replacing ‘Race’, Historicizing ‘Culture’ in Multiculturalism” in *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 39, No. 4, 379-396.
- Ling, H. (2004). *Chinese St. Louis: from Enclave to Cultural Community*. Temple University Press.

Lucy, J. A. (1997). "Linguistic Relativity" in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Volume 26, 291-312.

- (1996). The Scope of Linguistic Relativity: an Analysis and Review of Empirical Research. In John J. Gumperz and Stephen C. Levinson (ed.) *Rethinking linguistic relativity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Marcus, G. E. (2007). "Ethnography Two Decades after Writing Culture: From the Experimental to the Baroque" in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 80, Iss. 4, 1127-1145.

- Marcus, G. E., & Clifford, J. (1986). *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Morgan, M. (2004). Speech Community. In Alessandro Duranti (ed.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

- (1999). "Community" in *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*. Volume 9, Numbers 1-2, 1999. Page 36-38.

Ong, A. (1999). *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Pan, L. (1990). *Sons of the Yellow Emperor: A History of the Overseas Chinese*. London: Secker & Warburg.

Roberts, J. A. G. (2006). *A History of China (2nd ed.)*. Basingstoke [England]; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rutherford, J. (1990). *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Safran, W. (2005). The Jewish Diaspora in a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective. *Israel Studies*, 10(1), 36-60.

- (1991). "Diasporas in modern societies: Myths of homeland and return" in *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 1(1), 83-99.

Sapir, E. (1964). Conceptual Categories in Primitive Languages In D. Hymes (ed.), *Language in Culture and Society*. New York: Harper and Row.

- (1921). *Language, An introduction to the Study of Speech*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and company.

Saussure, F. d., Bally, C., Sechehaye, A., & Reidlinger, A. (1966). *Course in General Linguistics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Schurmann F. and Schell, O. (1967) *The China Reader. Imperial China: The Decline of the Last Dynasty and the Origins of Modern China. The 18th and 19th Centuries*. New York: Random House

- Schieffelin, B. B., & Ochs, E. (1986). *Language Socialization across Cultures*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Silverstein, Michael (1979). Language Structure and Linguistic Ideology. In P. R. Clyne, W. Hanks, C. Hofbauer (ed.) *The Elements: A Parasession on Linguistic Units and Levels*. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.
- Simpson, A. (2007). *Language and National Identity in Asia*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smith (2004). Hegemony. In Nugent, D., & Vincent, J., *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tao, C., & Hinton, D. (1993). *The Selected Poems of T'ao ch'ien*. Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press.
- Tu, W. (1994). *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Urciuoli, B. (1996). *Exposing Prejudice: Puerto Rican Experiences of Language, Race, and Class*. Boulder, Colo: Westview Press.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wang, G. (1992). *China and the Chinese Overseas*. Singapore: Times Academic Press.
- Wang, Q. E. (2001). *Inventing China through History: May Fourth Approach to Historiography*. State University of New York Press.
- Wei-ming, T. (1991). Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center. *Daedalus*, 120(2), The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today), 1-32.
- Wickberg, E. (2007). Global Chinese Migrants and Performing Chineseness. *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 3(2), 177-193.
- Zhou, Min (2005). The Chinese Diaspora and International Migration. In Bian, Chan and (ed.) *Social Transformations in Chinese Societies: The Official Annual of the Hong Kong Sociological Association*. Volume 1. Page 161-190. Brill Academic Publishers.